AYTAPKEIA;

OR THE

ART

OF DIVINE

CONTENTMENT.

BY

THO. WATSON,

Paſtor of *Stephens Walbrook*,

LONDON.

The Fourteenth Edition.

1 Tim. 6. 6.

Godlineſs with Contentment is great gain.

Κέρδος φέρειν χρὴ ξυντὸν ὄντα συμφορᾷς. Eurip.

Beatus eſt qui ſuis contentus eſt. Sen.

LONDON,

Printed for *Ralph Smith*, at the Sign of the Bible in the Piazza of the *Royal Exchange* in *Cornhill*, 1676.

AYTAPKEIA;
OR THE
ART
OF DIVINE
CONTENTMENT.

BY
THO. WATSON,
Paſtor of *Stephens Walbrook*,
LONDON.

The Fourteenth Edition.

1 Tim. 6. 6.
Godlineſs with Contentment is great gain.
Κέρδος φέρειν χρὴ ξυντὸν ὄντα συμφορᾷς. Eurip.
Beatus eſt qui ſuis contentus eſt. Sen.

LONDON,
Printed for *Ralph Smith*, at the Sign of the Bible in the Piazza of the *Royal Exchange* in *Cornhill*, 1676.

THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

Christian Reader,

HAving seriously considered the great dishonours done to Almighty God (as well as the prejudice which doth accrue to our own selves, by the sin of discontent (a Catholick and Epidemical sin*), it did at first put me upon the study of this subject. Nor is it incongruous to handle this next in order to the *Christian Charter*. I shewed

* *In statu maxime querulo & mœroso positi sumus.* Sen.

ſhewed you *there* the great things which a Believer hath in reverſion, *Things to come are his:* And here, behold a Chriſtians holy and gracions deportment in this life, which diſcovers it ſelf in nothing more eminently than in *Contentation.* Diſcontent is to the ſoul, as a diſeaſe to the body *; it puts out of temper, and doth much hinder its regular and ſublime motions heaven-ward. Diſcontent is hereditary, and no doubt but it is much augmented by the many ſad eclipſes and changes that have fallen out of late in the Body Politick; yet thy diſeaſe is not to be pleaded for, becauſe natural; but to be reſiſted, becauſe ſinful. That which ſhould make us out of love with this ſullen diſtemper, is the contemplating the beautiful Queen of *Contentment* *. For my part, I know not any ornament in Religion that doth more beſpangle a Chriſtian, or glitter in the eye of God and Man, than

* *Eſt animi ægritudo.* Cic. Tuſc.

* *Contraria juxta ſe poſita*, &c.

than this of contentment: Nor certainly is there any thing wherein all the Chriſtian Virtues do work more harmoniouſly, or ſhine more tranſparently, than in this Orb. Every Grace doth act its part here, and help to keep the Soul in its εὐκρασία: This is the true Philoſophers ſtone, which turns all into gold: This is the curious enamel and embroidery of the heart, which makes Chriſts Spouſe all *glorious* within. How ſhould every Chriſtian be ambitious to wear ſuch a ſparkling Diamond! If there be a bleſſed life before we come at Heaven, it is the contented life. And why not contented? *Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen* *? Man of all Creatures, hath the leaſt cauſe to be diſcontented. Canſt thou deſerve any thing from God? doth he owe thee any thing? What if the Scene turn, and God puts thee under the *Black-Rod*? Whereas he uſeth a Rod, he

* Gen 4. 6.

might use a Scorpion; he might as well damn thee, as whip thee: Why then art thou so querulous? why dost thou give way to this irrational and unthankful sin of discontent? The good Lord humble his own people from nourishing such a Viper in their breast, as doth not only cut out the bowels of their comfort; but spits venome in the face of God himself. Oh Christian, who art overspread with this *fretting leprosie*, thou carriest the *man of sin* about thee; for thou settest thy self above God; and as if thou wert wiser than he, wouldst saucily prescribe him what condition is best for thee. O this *devil of discontent*, which whomsoever it possesseth, it makes his heart a little Hell *! I know there will not be perfect contentment here in this life *, οὐχ ὅστις πάντ' ἀνὴρ εὐδαιμονεῖ. Perfect pleasure is only at *Gods right hand* *; yet we may begin here to tune our Instrument, before we play the

*ταράττειν, exin. τάρταρος.

*. *Amplissima quaque lætitia subsit quæpiam vel parva querimonia*, Luc. Apul. Florid. l. 2.

* Ps. 16. 11.

the ſweet leſſon of contentment exactly in Heaven. I ſhould be glad if this little piece might be like *Moſes* his caſting the tree into the waters *, to make the uncouth bitter condition of life more ſweet and pleaſant to drink of. I have once more adventured into the publick ; *this* I acknowledge to be *rudi Minervâ*, home-ſpun ; ſome better hand might have made a more curious draught : but having preached upon the ſubject, I was earneſtly ſolicited by ſome of my Hearers to publiſh it ; and although it is not dreſt in that rich attire of eloquence as it might, yet I am not about Poetry or Oratory, but Divinity ; nor is this intended for fancy, but Practice. If I may herein do any ſervice, or caſt but a mite into the Treaſury of the Churches Grace, I have my deſire. The end of our living is to live to God, and to lift up his Name in the world *. The Lord add an affectual bleſſing

* Exod. 15. 25.

* *Nihil turpius eſt quam grandis natu ſenex qui nullum aliud habet argumentum quo probet ſe diu vixiſſe, præter ætatem.* Seneca de Tranquil.

bleſſing to this work, and faſten it as a nail in a ſure place: He of his mercy make it as ſpiritual Phyſick, to purge the ill humour of diſcontent out of our hearts, that ſo a Crown of honour may be ſet upon the head of Religion, and the chryſtal ſtreams of Joy and Peace may ever run in our Souls: which is the Prayer of him who is deſirous to be a faithfull Orator for thee at the Throne of Grace.

From my Study at *Stephens walbrook*, May 5. 1653.

Thomas Watſon.

TO

TO THE

Chriſtian Reader.

A Word ſpoken in due ſeaſon, how good is it*! *As God* giveth to his Creatures their meat in ſeaſon*, ſo his faithful Stewards provide for his houſhold their portion of meat in due ſeaſon*. *And as it is with corporal food, the ſeaſon addeth much both to the value and uſefulneſs thereof; in like manner it is with food ſpiritual: In this regard the brokenneſs of theſe times (wherein the boſoms of moſt people are filled with diſquiets, and their mouths with murmurings) may well render this Treatiſe the more acceptable. The Seas are not ſo ſtormy as mens ſpirits are tempeſtuous, toſſed to and fro with diſcontents. And now the Lord* (who maketh every thing beautiful in his time) *hath moſt opportunely put into thy hand a profitable diſcourſe to calm unquiet hearts.* Adam *in Paradiſe daſhed upon the Rock of diſcontent (which ſome Divines conceive was his firſt ſin.) This, with many inſtances more in Scripture, together with our*

* Prov. 15. 13.
* Pſal. 104. 27.
* Luk. 2. 42
Eccl. 3. 11.

own

own sad experience, doth both speak our danger and call for caution. Now godliness *is the only soveraign antidote against this spreading disease; and Gods* grace *alone (being settled and exercised in the heart) can cause steadiness in stormy times* *. *Whereas,* contentation ariseth either from the fruition of all comforts, or from a not desiring of some which we have not *. *True piety doth put a Christian into such a condition: Hereby we both possess God, and are taught how to improve him, who is the only satisfying everlasting portion of his people* *. *Herein Christ (though poor in this world) greatly rejoyced,* The Lord is the portion of my inheritance, the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage: *Upon this account also* Jacob *said* I have nothing *; *or, as it is in the original,* I have all, *God the Father and Christ his Son had sweet satisfaction in each other, when there was no other Being* *; *therefore such who possess and improve God through Christ, cannot possibly be dissatisfied. The Almighty is the God of* all grace *, of* all comforts *, *and of* salvations *; *in which respect neither deficiencies or disappointments, losses or crosses, can cause disquieting discontents in that bosom where Faith is Commander in chief. The Prophet* Habakkuk *rejoyced in the*

* Heb. 13.5

* Dr. *Hall.*

* Psal. 16. 25, 26.
* Mat. 8. 20
* Psal. 73. 5, 6.

Ubi bene esse poterit sine te? ubi male esse poterit cum te? *Bern.*

* Gen. 33. 11.
* Prov. 8. 30, 31.
* 1 Pet. 5. 10.
* 2 Cor. 1. 4
* Psal. 68. 20.

the God of his ſalvation, *when* the peſtilence went before him *, and burning coals came forth of his feet, *and when he ſuppoſed all creature-ſuccours, both for delight and neceſſity, to be quite removed. This, this is the life which Chriſtians ſhould endeavour, and may attain by the vigorous regular actings of pretious faith. This is the gain of Contentment, which comes in by godlineſs, when providences are black and likely to be bloody, now,* the juſt ſhall live by his faith *. *That ſpeech of learned M.* Gataker *is weighty, and well worth the marking,* A contented mind argues a religious heart, and a diſcontented mind argues an irreligious heart. *And that worthy Divine Mr.* Greenham *was bold to ſay,* They never felt Gods love, or taſted forgiveneſs of ſins, who are diſcontented. *This likewiſe was an holy breathing of Reverend Dr.* Hall *in his Meditations,* I have ſomewhat of the beſt things; I will with thankfulneſs enjoy them, and will want the reſt with contentment. *By attaining and maintaining this frame of heart, we might have much of heaven on this ſide heaven. Holy contentment maketh them truly rich, whom the oppreſſing world maketh very poor *. Hereby our ſweeteſt morſels ſhall be well ſeaſoned, and our bittereſt potions well ſweetn'd *. Had we learn'd to enjoy con-*

* Heb. 3. 5. 17. 11.

* Hab. 2. 4. Heb. 10. 31

* Dives eſt qui ſuâ ſorte gaudet; animus eſt potiſſimum qui divit es facit. *Sen.*

* Pro. 17. 1.

tent-

own sad experience, doth both speak our danger and call for caution. Now godliness *is the only soveraign antidote against this spreading disease; and Gods* grace *alone (being settled and exercised in the heart) can* * Heb. 13.9 *cause steadiness in stormy times* *. *Whereas,* contentation ariseth either from the fruition of all comforts, or from a not desiring of some which we have not *. *True piety doth* * Dr. Hall. *put a Christian into such a condition: Hereby we both possess God, and are taught how to improve him, who is the only satisfying everlasting portion of his people* *. *Herein* * Psal. 16. 25, 26. *Christ (though poor in this world) greatly* * Mat. 8. 20 *rejoyced,* The Lord is the portion of my inheritance, the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage: * Psal. 73. 5, 6. *Upon this account also* Jacob *said* I have nothing *; *or, as it is in the original,* I have all, *God the Father and Christ his Son had sweet satisfaction in each other, when there was no other Being* *; *therefore such who possess and improve God through Christ, cannot possibly be dissatisfied. The Almighty is the God of* all grace *, *of* all comforts *, *and of* salvations *; *in which respect neither deficiencies or disappointments, losses or crosses, can cause disquieting discontents in that bosom where Faith is Commander in chief. The Prophet* Habakkuk *rejoyced in the*

Libi bene esse poterit sine te? ubi male esse poterit cum te? Bern.

* Gen. 33. 11.

* Prov. 8. 30, 31.

* 1 Pet. 5. 10.

* 2 Cor. 1. 4

* Psal. 68. 20.

the God of his ſalvation, *when* the peſtilence went before him *, and burning coals came forth of his feet, *and when he ſuppoſed all creature-ſuccours, both for delight and neceſſity, to be quite removed. This, this is the life which Chriſtians ſhould endeavour, and may attain by the vigorous regular actings of pretious faith. This is the gain of Contentment, which comes in by godlineſs, when providences are black and likely to be bloody, now,* the juſt ſhall live by his faith *. *That ſpeech of learned M.* Gataker *is weighty, and well worth the marking,* A contented mind argues a religious heart, and a diſcontented mind argues an irreligious heart. *And that worthy Divine Mr.* Greenham *was bold to ſay,* They never felt Gods love, or taſted forgiveneſs of ſins, who are diſcontented. *This likewiſe was an holy breathing of Reverend Dr.* Hall *in his Meditations,* I have ſomewhat of the beſt things; I will with thankfulneſs enjoy them, and will want the reſt with contentment. *By attaining and maintaining this frame of heart, we might have much of heaven on this ſide heaven. Holy contentment maketh them truly rich, whom the oppreſſing world maketh very poor *. Hereby our ſweeteſt morſels ſhall be well ſeaſoned, and our bittereſt potions well ſweetn'd *. Had we learn'd to enjoy con-*

* Heb. 3. 5. 17. 11.

* Hab. 2. 4. Heb. 10. 31

* Dives eſt qui ſuâ ſorte gaudet; animus eſt potiſſimum qui divites facit. *Sen.*

* Pro. 17. 1.

tent-

Nihil tam acerbum est, in quo non æquus animus solatium inveniat. *Idem.*

tentment *in* Jehovah, *who is immutable and all-sufficient, this heavenly frame of spirit should never perish or change in the midst of the most amazing alterations in Church and State with which his Majesty is pleased to exercise us: whereas, because we live alone upon sublunaries, therefore we are apt with* Nabal *to die upon the nest* *, *through dejectedness, upon the approach of Imagined danger. When God seeth cause to cut us short of many creature accommodations, Faith will moderate our desires after them, assuring the soul that nothing is withdrawn or withheld which might be really advantagious: and doubtless it is a great piece of happiness upon earth, not to long after that which the Lord is pleased to deny. Indeed men act rather like Heathens than Christians when they fret upon some particular inferiour disappointments, notwithstanding Gods liberality laid forth upon them in many other respects: As* Alexander *the Monarch of the world was discontented, because Ivy would not grow in his gardens at* Babylon. Diogenes *the Cynick was herein more wise, who finding a Mouse in his Sachel, said,* He saw that himself was not so poor, but some were glad of his leavings. *Oh how might we (if we had hearts to improve higher providences) rock our peevish spirits quiet by much stronger argu-*

* 1 Sam. 25. 37.

* Beatus est qui quæ non habet, non cupit. *Aug.* Omnia habet, qui nihil concupiscit. *Sen.*

arguments! Let us then lay before our eyes * Gen. 28.
the practices of pious men, recorded in Scrip- 20.
ture for our imitation, as Jacob, Agur, Paul, Pro. 30. 8.
&c. and let us charge home upon our con- 1 Tim. 6. 7.
sciences divine exhortations, backed with
strong reasons, and encouraged with sweet
promises. It was the grave counsel of holy
Greenham, Having food and raiment, take
the rest as an oyer-plus. Are we not less than Gen. 32. 10
the least of Gods mercies? Is not God
our bountiful benefactor? Why then do we
not rest contented with his liberal allowance?
Oh let us chide our wrangling spirits, and
encourage confidence with contentment in Psal. 43. 5.
God, as blessed David did. My Pen hath
out-run my purpose when I undertook this
Preface; but I will no longer (good Reader)
detain thee in the Porch, wherein I have de-
signed to quicken and to prepare thee to the
more fruitful improvement of this seasonable
useful Treatise, wherein the Author hath
exercised to good purpose both the Christian
graces and Ministerial gifts with which God
hath enriched him. Herein the Doctrine of
Christian Contentment is clearly illustrated,
and profitably applied; the special cases
(wherein through changes of providences
discontents are most commonly occasioned)
are particularized, and preservatives ap-
plied to secure the soul. Although some other

worthy

worthy Divines have been helpful to the Church of God by their discourses upon this subject; yet there is much of peculiar use in this Treatise. The Apostle tells us that some manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. *Thy soul-profit is propounded as the Authors end in publishing this Piece: and that this end may be accomplished, is the unfeigned desire and hearty prayer of him, who is*

Thy Servant in and for Christ,

May 3. 1653.

Simeon Ashe.

THE

The ART of Divine Contentment.

CHAP. I.

The Introduction of the Text.

Phil. 4. 11.

I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

THese words are brought in by way of *Prolepsis*, to anticipate and prevent an Objection. The Apostle had in the former Verses laid down many grave and heavenly Exhortations;

among the reſt; to be *careful for nothing*, Verſe 6. Not to exclude 1. *A prudential care* *: For *He that provideth not for his own houſe hath denied the Faith, and is worſe than an Infidel.* Nor 2. *A Religious care:* For, we muſt give all *diligence to make our Calling and Election ſure* *. But 3. To exclude all * *anxious care* about the iſſues and events of things; *Take no thought for your life what you ſhall eat* *; and in this ſenſe it ſhould be

* *Neque enim prohibetur, quod homo de rebus in poſtrum neceſſarius non ſolicitetur.* Aquin. in Heb. 13. 1 Tim. 5. 8.

* 2 Pet. 1. 10.

* *Jubet Apoſtolus, ut depona ur anxia tua: quod illa non niſi ex infidelitate proficiſcatur.* Zanch.

a Chriſtians care not to be careful. The word in the Greek [*Careful*] comes from a primitive, * that ſignifies, *To cut the heart in pieces*; a ſoul-dividing Care; take heed of this. We are bid to *commit* * *our waies unto the Lord:* the Hebrew word is, *Roll* * *thy way upon the Lord.* It is our work to caſt care,

* Dicitur μεριμνᾶν παρὰ τὸ μερίζειν τὴν ψυχήν.

* Pſa. 37. 5. גּוֹר עַל יְהוָה דַּרְכֶּךָ

care *; and it is Gods work to take care. By our immoderacy we take his work out of his hand. * Pet. 5. 7.

Care when it is *excentrick*, either diſtruſtful, or diſtracting, is very diſhonourable to God; it takes away his providence, as if he ſate in heaven, and minded not what became of things here below; like a man that makes a Clock, and then leaves it to go of it ſelf. Immoderate care takes the heart off from better things; and uſually while we are thinking how we ſhall do to live, we forget how to die. *Curis tabeſcimus omnes.* ——Care is a ſpiritual Canker; that doth waſte and diſpirit; *& cui bono?* we may ſooner by our care add a *furlong* to our grief, than a *cubit* to our comfort. God doth threaten it as a curſe, *They ſhall eat their bread with carefulneſs* *: better faſt, than eat of that bread. *Be careful for nothing.* * Ezek. 12. 19.

Now leſt any one ſhould ſay,

yea, *Paul*, thou preacheſt that to us which thou haſt ſcarce learned thy ſelf; Haſt thou learned not to be careful? The Apoſtle ſeems tacitely to anſwer that, in the words of the Text; *I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.*

Egregia Sententia! A ſpeech worthy to be engraven upon our hearts, and to be written in letters of Gold upon the Crowns and Diadems of Princes. The Text doth branch it ſelf into theſe two general Parts.

I. The Scholar, *Paul*: *I have learned.*

II. The Leſſon: *In every ſtate to be content.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The first branch of the Text, The Scholar; *with the first Proposition.*

I Begin with the first. 1. The Scholar, and his proficiency; *I have learned*: Out of which I shall *in transitu* observe two things by way of paraphrase.

1. It is not ἤκουσα but ἔμαθον. The Apostle doth not say, I have *heard*, that in every state I should be content; but, I have *learned*; Whence *Doct.* 1. *It is not enough for Christians to hear their Duty, but they must learn their duty.*

1. *Observ.* ἔμαθον, it is a Practick word.

Doct. 1.

It is one thing to hear, and another thing to learn; as it is one thing to eat, and another thing to concoct. St. *Paul* was a Practi-

tioner. Christians hear much, but it is to be feared, learn little. There were four sorts of ground in the Parable *, and but one good ground. An emblem of this truth; many *Hearers*, but few *Learners*. There are two things which keep us from learning.

* Luk.8.5.

1. *Slighting what we hear.* Christ is the *Pearl of price*: when we disesteem this Pearl, we shall never learn, either its value, or its vertue. The Gospel is a rare Mystery; in one place it is called the *Gospel of Grace*; in another, * *the Gospel of Glory*, because in it, as in a transparent Glass, the Glory of God is resplendent: But, he that hath learned to contemn this Mystery, will hardly ever learn to obey it. He that looks upon the things of Heaven, as things by the by; and perhaps the driving of a trade, or carrying on some Politick design, to be of greater importance

* τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς χάριτος Act.20.24.

* τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς δόξης.

this

this man is in the high-road to damnation, and will hardly ever learn the things of his peace; who will learn that which he thinks is ſcarce worth learning?

2. *Forgetting what we hear* *. If a Scholar have his Rules laid before him, and he forgets them as faſt as he reads them, he will never learn. *Ariſtotle* calls the Memory, the *Scribe* of the Soul; and *Bernard* calls it the *Stomach* of the Soul, becauſe it hath a retentive faculty, and turns heavenly food into blood and ſpirits. We have great memories in other things; we remember that which is *vain*. *Cyrus* could remember the name of every Souldier in his huge Army; we remember *injuries* *. This is to fill a pretious Cabinet with Dung; but *quàm facilis oblivio boni?* as *Hierom* ſaith, how ſoon do we forget the ſacred truths of God? We are apt to forget three things, our *faults*, our

2. *Tantum ſcimus quantum in memoria tenemus.* Plato in Timæo. * Jam. 1. 25.

* *Scibit in marmore Jeſus.* Cic. l. 2. de Orat.

friends, our *inſtructions*. Many Chriſtians are like Sieves; put a Sieve into the water, and it is full; but take it forth of the water, and all runs out; So, while they are hearing of a Sermon, they remember ſomething, but *take the Sieve out of the Water*, as ſoon as they are gone out of the Church, all is forgotten. *Let theſe ſayings* (ſaith Chriſt) *ſink down into your ears* *; in the original it is *put theſe ſayings into your ears**. As a man that would hide a Jewel from being ſtollen, locks it up ſafe in his Cheſt. *Let them ſink*; The Word muſt not only fall as the dew that wets the leaf, but as rain which ſoaks to the root of the Tree, and makes it fructifie. O how often doth Satan, that Fowl of the Air, pick up the good ſeed that is ſown!

* Luke 9. 44.

* θέσθε ὑμεῖς.

Uſe. Trial. *Uſe.* Let me put you upon a ſerious tryal? Some of you have heard

heard much, you have lived forty, fifty, ſixty years under the bleſſed Trumpet of the Goſpel: What have you learned? you may have heard a thouſand Sermons, and yet not learned one: Search your conſciences.

1. You have heard much againſt ſin: Are you *Hearers*, or are you *Scholars*.

How many Sermons have you heard againſt *Covetouſneſs*, That it is the *root* on which Pride, Idolatry, Treaſon do grow*? one calls it a * Metropolitan ſin: It is *Malum complexum*, it doth twiſt a great many ſins in with it. There is hardly any ſin but Covetouſneſs is a main ingredient into it; and yet are you like the two daughters of the Horſe-leech: which cry, *give, give.*

* 2 Tim. 2. 4.

* Μητροπολιν πάσης κακίας.

How much have you heard againſt *raſh anger*; That it is a ſhort phrenſie*, a dry drunkenneſs; that it reſts in

* *Ira eſt brevis insania.* Sen.

in the *bosome of fools**? and upon the least occasion do your spirits * begin to take fire? How much have you heard against *Swearing*? It is Christs expres Mandate, *Swear not at all**; this sin of all other may be term'd the *unfruitful work of darkness**; It is neither sweetned with pleasure, nor enriched with profit (the usual Vermilion, wherewith Satan doth paint sin.) Swearing is forbidden with a *sub pœna*. While the Swearer shoots his Oaths, like *flying arrows*, at God, to pierce his glory, God shoots a *flying Roll* of * Curses against him: and do you make your tongue a *Racket*, by which you toss Oaths as Tennis-balls? Do you sport your selves with Oaths, as the Philistines did with *Sampson*, which will at last pull the house about your ears? Alas! how have they learned what sin is, that have not yet learned

* *Quod prodest vinum non bibere, & ira inebriari?* Hier. Eccl. 7. 9.

* *Magnoque irarum fluctuat æstu.* Virg.

*Mat. 5. 34

* Eph. 5. 11.

* Zach. 5. 2, 4.

learned to leave ſin? doth he know what a Viper is, that plaies with it?

2. You have heard much of Chriſt; have you learned Chriſt? The Jews (as one ſaith) carried Chriſt in their *Bibles*, but not in their *heart* *; Their ſound *went into all the earth* *, *Rom.* 10. 18. The Prophets and Apoſtles were as trumpets, whoſe ſound went abroad into the World; yet many thouſands who heard the noiſe of theſe Trumpets, had not learned Chriſt; *They have not all obeyed*, ver. 16. *

* Hierom. * Rom. 14. 18.

* Ἀλλ' οὐ πάντες ὑπήκουσαν.

1. A man may know much of Chriſt, and yet not learn Chriſt. The *devils* knew Chriſt *.

* Mat. 1. 24.

2. A man may preach Chriſt, and yet not learn Chriſt; as *Judas*, and the pſeudo-Apoſtles *.

* Phil. 5. 15.

3. A man may profeſs Chriſt, and yet not learn Chriſt. There are many profeſſors in the World that Chriſt will profeſs againſt *.

* Mat. 7. 22, 23.

Queſt.

Quæſt. What is it then to learn Chriſt?

Anſw. 1. To learn Chriſt, is to be *made like Chriſt*, when the divine characters of his holineſs are engraven upon our hearts; *we all with open face beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image* *: There is Metamorphoſis made: A ſinner viewing Chriſts Image in the Glaſs of the Goſpel, is transformed into that Image. Never did any man look upon Chriſt with a ſpiritual eye, but went away quite changed. A true Saint is a divine Land-skip or Picture, where all the rare beauties of Chriſt are lively pourtrayed and drawn forth: He hath the ſame Spirit, the ſame Judgment, the ſame Will with Jeſus Chriſt.

* Cor. 3. 18. μεταμορφόμεθα.

2. To learn Chriſt, is to *believe* in him; *My Lord, my God*: When we do not only *credere Deum*, but *in Deum*; which is the actual application of

John. 20. 28.

of Chriſt to our ſelves, and as it were the ſpreading of the ſacred medicine of his blood upon our Soul. You that have heard much of Chriſt, and yet cannot with an humble adherence ſay, *My Jeſus*; be not offended if I tell you, the Devil can ſay his Creed as well as you.

3. To learn Chriſt, is to *live Chriſt*. When we have Bible-converſations, our Lives as rich Diamonds caſt a ſparkling luſtre in the Church of God*, and are (in ſome ſenſe) parallel with the life of Chriſt, as the tranſcript with the Original. So much for the firſt notion of the word.

* Phil. 1. 27.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Containing the Second Proposition.

II. THis word ἔμαθον, *I have learned*, is a word imports difficulty; it shews how hardly the Apostle came by his contentment of mind; it was not *natura gentium*, S. *Paul* did not come naturally by it, but he had learned it*. It cost him many a prayer and tear; it was taught him by the Spirit.

2. *Observ.* ἔμαθον is a word imports difficulty.

* Ἔμαθον *significat hanc rem esse disciplinæ, & exercitationis, & se divinitus doctum esse.* Estius *in loc.* Beza.

Non ex revelatione, aut ex libris didicit, sed ex longo rerum usu, & gratia Christi per spiritum residente. Zanchy.

Doctr. 2.

Whence, *Doct.* 2. *Good things are hard to come by.* The business of Religion is not so facile as most do imagine: *I have learned*, saith S. *Paul**. Indeed you need not learn a man to sin, this

* Ἄρα διδακαλίας ἐστὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα καὶ γυμνασίας καὶ μελέτης, οὐ γὰρ εὐκοτόρθωτόν ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ σφόδρα δύσκολον καὶ καινόν. Chrysost.

this is natural *, and therefore facile, it comes as water out of a Spring. 'Tis an eaſie thing to be wicked; Hell will be taken without ſtorm *, but matter of Religion muſt be learned. To cut the fleſh is eaſie; but to prick a Vein, and not to cut an Artery is hard. The trade of ſin needs not to be learned, but the *Art of Divine Contentment* is not atchieved without holy induſtry; ἐμαθον, *I have learned.*

* Pſal. 58.

* *Facilis deſcenſus Averni.*

There are two pregnant reaſons why there muſt be ſo much ſtudy and exercitation.

1. Becauſe ſpiritual things are againſt nature. Every thing in Religion is antipodes to Nature. There are in Religion two things, *Credenda*, *& Facienda*, and both are againſt Nature. 1. *Credenda*, Matters of Faith. As, for a man to be juſtified by the righteouſneſs of another; to become a fool that he may be wiſe; to ſave all by loſing all; this is *againſt nature.* 2. *Facienda*,

1. *Contra naturam.*

1. *Credenda.*

2. *Facienda.*

enda, Matters of *Practice*. As, 1. *Self-denial*; for a man to deny his own *wiſdom*, and ſee himſelf blind; his own *will*, and have it melted into the Will of God; plucking out the right eye, beheading and crucifying that ſin, which is the *favorite*, and lies neareſt to the heart *; For a man to be dead to the world; and in the midſt of want to abound; For a man to take up the Croſs, and follow Chriſt, not only in golden, but bloody paths; to embrace Religion when it is dreſs'd in its night-clothes, all the Jewels of honour and preferment being pull'd off; this is *againſt nature*, and therefore muſt be learned. 2. *Self-examination*; For a man to take his heart (as a Watch) all in pieces; to ſet up a ſpiritual inquiſition, or Court of conſcience, and traverſe things in his own ſoul; to take *David*'s Candle and Lanthorn *, and ſearch for ſin; nay as Judge to paſs the ſentence upon him-

* *Peccatum in deliciis.* Ber.

Malamus vitium excuſare, quàm excutere. Sen.

* Pſal. 119. 105.

himſelf * this is *againſt nature*, and will not eaſily be attained to without learning. 3. *Self-reformation.* To ſee a man as *Caleb*, *of another ſpirit*, walking antipodes to himſelf; the current of his life altered, and running into the chanel of Religion; this is wholly *againſt nature*; when a ſtone aſcends, it is not a natural motion, but a violent; the motion of the ſoul heaven-ward is a violent motion, it muſt be learned, fleſh and blood is not skill'd in theſe things: Nature can no more caſt out Nature, than Satan can caſt out Satan.

* 2 Sam. 24. 17. *Meme adſum qui feci, in me convertite ferrum.*

2. Becauſe ſpiritual things are *above nature.* There are ſome things *in nature*, that are hard to find out, as the cauſes of things, which are not learnt without ſtudy: *Ariſtotle*, (a great Philoſopher) whom ſome have call'd an Eagle fallen from the clouds; yet could not find out the motion of the river *Euripus*, there-

2. *Supra naturam.*

fore threw himſelf into it, what then are divine things, which are in a ſphere above nature, and beyond all humane diſquiſition? as the Trinity, the hypoſtatical Union; the myſtery of Faith, to believe againſt hope; only Gods Spirit can light our Candle here. The Apoſtle calls theſe *the deep things of God**. The Goſpel is full of Jewels, but they are lock'd up from ſenſe and reaſon. The Angels in Heaven are ſearching into theſe ſacred depths*.

* Τὰ βάθη τῦ Θεῦ. 1 Cor. 2. 10

* 1 Pet. 1. 12

Uſe. Let us beg the Spirit of God to teach us, we muſt be *divinitùs edocti*: The Eunuch could read, but he could not underſtand, till *Philip joined himſelf to his Chariot**. Gods Spirit muſt joyn himſelf to our chariot; he muſt teach, or we cannot learn: *All thy children ſhall be taught of the Lord**. A man may read the figure on the Dial, but he cannot tell how the day goes, unleſs the Sun ſhine upon the Dial; we may read the

Uſe.

* Act. 8. 29

* Iſ. 53. 13.

the Bible over, but we cannot learn to purpoſe till the Spirit of God *ſhines into our hearts* *. Oh, implore this bleſſed Spirit, it is Gods Prerogative-Royal to teach. *I am the Lord thy God, that teacheth thee to profit* *. Miniſters may *tell* us our leſſon, God only can *teach us*; We have loſt both our hearing and eye-ſight; therefore are very unfit to learn. Ever ſince *Eve* liſtened to the Serpent, we have been deaf; and ſince ſhe looked on the tree of Knowledge, we have been blind: but when God comes to teach, He removes theſe impediments *. We are naturally dead *; who will go about to teach a dead man? Yet behold, God undertakes to make dead men to underſtand myſteries! God is the grand Teacher. This is the reaſon the Word preached works ſo differently upon men: two in a Pew, the one is wrought upon effectually, the other lies at the Or-

* 2 Co. 4. 6.

* Iſa. 48. 17.

* Iſa. 35. 5.

* Eph. 2. 17.

dinances as a dead Child at the Breaſt, and gets no nouriſhment. What is the reaſon? becauſe the Heavenly gale of the ſpirit blows upon one, and not upon the other; One hath *the anointing of God which teacheth him all things* *, the other hath it not. Gods ſpirit ſpeaks ſweetly but irreſiſtibly. In that heavenly doxology, none could ſing the new ſong, but thoſe who were *ſealed in their foreheads* *, reprobates could not ſing it *. Thoſe that are skilful in the Myſteries of Salvation, muſt have the Seal of the Spirit upon them. Let us make this our prayer, *Lord, breathe thy Spirit into thy Word*; and we have a promiſe, which may add wings to prayer, *If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your Children, how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give his Spirit to them that ask him?*

* 1 John 2. 27.

* Rev. 14. 2.

* *Novum Canticum reprobi diſcere non poſſunt.* Peræus.

* Luk. 11. 13.

And thus much for the firſt part of the

the Text, The *Scholar*; which I intended only as a ſhort gloſs or paraphraſe.

CHAP. IV.

The ſecond branch of the Text, The Leſſon *it ſelf*; *with the propoſition.*

II. I Come now to the ſecond, which is the main thing, *The Leſſon* it ſelf; *in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.* II.

Here was a rare piece of learning indeed, and certainly more to be wondred at in St. *Paul*, that he knew how to turn himſelf to every condition, than all the learning in

the world beſides, which hath been ſo applauded in former ages by *Julius Cæſar*, *Ptolomy*, *Xenophon*, the great admirers of Learning.

The Text hath but few words in it, *In every ſtate be content*: But if that be true which once *Fulgentius* ſaid, That the moſt golden Sentence is ever meaſured by *brevity* and *ſuavity*, then this is a moſt accompliſhed Speech; here is *magnum in parvo*. The Text is like a pretious Jewel, little in *quantity*, but great in *worth* and *value*.

Doctr. The main Propoſition I ſhall inſiſt upon is this, *that a gracious ſpirit is a contented ſpirit*. The Doctrine of Contentment is very ſuperlative; and till we have learned this, we have not learned to be Chriſtians.

1. It is an *hard Leſſon*. *The Angels* in Heaven had not learned it; they were not contented: Though their eſtate was very glorious, yet they

they were ſtill ſoaring aloft, and aimed at Something higher, *Jud. ver. 6. The Angels which kept not their firſt eſtate*; they kept not their eſtate, becauſe they were not contented with their eſtate. Our firſt Parents cloath'd with the white robe of Innocency in Paradiſe, had not learned to be content; they had aſpiring hearts, and thinking their humane nature too low and home ſpun, would be crowned with the Deity, and be *as Gods:* Though they had the * choice of all the trees in the Garden, yet none would content them but the *tree of Knowledge*, which they ſuppoſed would have been as eye-ſalve to have made them omniſcient. Oh then, if this Leſſon were ſo hard to learn *in innocency*, how hard ſhall we find it *, who are clogged with corruption?

* Gen. 3. 5.

* *Ars omnino mira & difficilis quæ toto cordis adniſu diſcenda eſt.* Greg. *hom.* 16. *in* Ezech.

2. It is of *univerſal extent*, concerns all. 1. It concerns *Rich men.* One would think it needleſs to

to preſs thoſe to Contentment, whom God hath bleſſed with great eſtates, but rather perſwade them to be humble and thankful; nay, but I ſay, *be content*. Rich men have their diſcontents as well as others, as appears, 1. When they have a great eſtate, yet they are diſcontented that they have no more; they would make the hundred Talents a thouſand. A man in Wine, the more he drinks, the more he thirſts: Covetouſneſs is a dry dropſie: an earthly heart is like the *grave that is never ſatisfied* *. Therefore I ſay to you rich men, *Be content*.

2. Rich men, if we may ſuppoſe them to be content with their eſtates (which is very ſeldom) yet, though they have *eſtate* enough, they have not *honor* enough *; If their *Barns* are full enough, yet their *Turrets* are not high enough. They would be ſome body in the world, as *Theudas who boaſted himſelf to be ſome body* *; they

* *Sicut hydropicus. Quo plus ſunt potæ, plus ſitiuntur aquæ.* Hyperius.

* Prov. 30. 16. Τὴν εὐδοξίαν ἤδη ἡγοῦσαν.

* Acts 5. 36.

they never go ſo chearfully as when the wind of honor and applauſe fills their ſails; if this wind be down they are diſcontented. One would think *Haman* had as much as his proud heart could deſire; he was ſet above all the Princes, advanced upon the pinacle of honor to be the ſecond man in the Kingdom *; yet in the midſt of all his pomp, becauſe *Mordecai* would not uncover and kneel, he is diſcontented, *verſe* 2. and full of wrath *verſe*. 5. and there is no way to aſſwage this pleuriſie of revenge, but by letting all the Jews blood, and offering them up in ſacrifice. The itch of honor is ſeldom allayed without blood; therefore I ſay to you rich men, *Be content.*

*Eſt. 3.1.

3. Rich men, if we may ſuppoſe them to be content with their honor and magnificent titles, yet they have not always contentment in their *relations.* She that lies in the boſom, may ſometimes blow the coals,

coals, as *Job*'s Wife, who in a pet would have him fall out with God himſelf, *Curſe God and die.* Sometimes children cauſe diſcontent; how oft is it ſeen that the Mothers milk doth nouriſh a Viper? and he that once ſuck'd her breaſt, goes about to ſuck her blood? Parents do often of *Grapes* gather Thorns, and of *figs* Thiſtles; Children are ſweet-briar: Like the Roſe, which is a fragrant flower, but, as *Baſil* ſaith, it hath its prickles. Our Relative comforts are not all pure wine, but mixed; they have in them more dregs than ſpirits, and are like that River *Plutarch* ſpeaks of *, where the waters in the morning run ſweet, but in the evening run bitter. We have no *Charter of exemption* granted us in this life; therefore rich men had need be called upon to be contented.

* Γλυκὺ-πικροι.

2. The Doctrine of Contentment concerns poor men. You that do ſuck ſo liberally from the breaſts

reaſts of Providence, *be content*; it s an hard Leſſon, therefore it had eed be ſet upon the ſooner. How ard is it when the livelihood is even one, a great eſtate boiled away alnoſt to nothing, then to be content? The means of ſubſiſtence is in Scripure called *our life*, becauſe it is he very ſinews of life. The woman in the Goſpel ſpent *all her living pon the Phyſicians* *: in the Greek t is ὅλον τὸν βίον; ſhe ſpent her whole ife upon the Phyſicians, becauſe ſhe pent her means by which ſhe ſhould ive. 'Tis much when poverty hath clipped our wings, then to be conent; but *difficilia pulchra*, though hard, it is excellent; and the Apoſtle here had learn'd *in every ſtate to be content.*

* Luke 8. 43.

God had brought Saint *Paul* into s great vairety of conditions, as ever we read of any man, and yet he was content; elſe ſure he could never have gone through it with ſo much chear-

chearfulneſs. See into what viciſſitudes this bleſſed Apoſtle was caſt; *we are troubled on every ſide* *, there was the *ſadneſs* of his condition; but *not diſtreſſed*, there was his *content* in that condition; *We are perplexed*, there is his *affliction*; *but not in deſpair*, there is his *contentation*. And if we read a little further, *In afflictions* *, *in neceſſities, in diſtreſſes, in ſtripes, in impriſonments, in tumults, &c.* there is his trobule; and behould his content, * *As having nothing yet poſſeſſing all things.* When the Apoſtle was driven out of all, yet in regard of that ſweet contentment of mind (which was like muſick in his Soul) he poſſeſſed all. We read a ſhort Map or Hiſtory of his ſufferings. *In priſons more frequent* *, *death oft, &c.* Yet behold the bleſſed frame and temper of his ſpirit, *have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am therewith to be content.*

* 2 Cor. 4. 8.

* 2 Cor. 6. 4.

* Verſ. 10.

* 2 Cor. 11. 23, 24, 25.

Which way ſoever Providen

d blow, he had ſuch heavenly skill
nd dexterity; that he knew how to
eer his courſe. For his outward
tate he was indifferent, he could
e either on the top of *Jacobs* Ladder
the bottom; he could ſing either
lacent a or *lachryma*, the dirge or the
ntheme; he could be any thing that
od would have him; *I know how*
want, and how to abound, there is
rare pattern for us to imitate.
aul in regard of his faith and cou-
ge, was like a Cedar, he could not
ſtirred; but for his outward con-
tion, he was like a *Reed*, bending
ery way with the wind of Provi-
ence. When a proſperous gale did
ow upon him, he could bend with
at, *I know how to be full*; and
hen a boiſterous guſt of affliction did
ow, he could bend in humility
ith that, *I know how to be hungry*. St.
aul was ἀνὴρ τετράγωνος, (as *Ariſtotle*
eaks) like a *Die* that hath four
uares, throw it which way you will,
it

Homo quadratus. Erasm.

it falls upon a bottom: Let God throw the Apostle which way he would, he fell upon this *bottom* of Contentment. A contented spirit is like a Watch; though you carry it up and down with you, yet the spring of it is not shaken, nor the wheels out of order, but the Watch keeps its perfect motion: so it was with St. *Paul*, though God had carried him into various conditions, yet he was not lift up with the one, nor cast down with the other. The *spring* of his heart was not broken, the *wheels* of his affection were not disordered, but kept their constant motion toward Heaven, *still content.* The Ship that lies at Anchor may sometimes be a little shaken, but never sinks: Flesh and blood may have its fears and disquiets, but grace doth check them: A Christian having cast Anchor in Heaven, his heart never sinks: a gracious spirit is a contented spirit.

This

This is a rare art: *Paul* did not learn it at the feet of *Gamaliel*; *I am inſtructed*, μεμύημαι *; *verſe* 12. I am initiated into this holy Myſtery: as if he had ſaid, I have gotten the *divine art*, I have the knack of it. God muſt make us right Artiſts. If we ſhould put ſome men to an Art that they are not skill'd in, how unfit would they be for it? Put an Husbandman to Limning or drawing Pictures, what ſtrange work would he make? this is out of his ſphere. Take a Limner, that is exact in laying of Colours, and put him to plough, or ſet him to planting and graffing of Trees, this is not his Art, he is not skill'd in it. Bid a natural man live by Faith, and when all things go croſs, *Be contented*; you bid him do that he has no skill in, you may as well bid a child guide the Stern of a Ship. To live contentedly upon God in the deficiency of outward comforts,

* Μεμύημαι. *Myſteriis initiatus ſum.* Zanchy. *Sacris imbutus ſum.* Ambr.

is

is an Art which *flesh and blood hath not revealed*: nay, many of Gods own children, who excell in some duties of Religion, when they come to this of *Contentment*, how do they bungle? they have scarce commenced Masters of this Art.

CHAP. III.

The Resolving of some Questions.

FOR the illustrating of this Doctrine, I shall propound these Questions.

Quest. *Quest.* 1. whether a Christian may not be sensible of his condition, and yet be contented.

Answ. *Answ.* Yes; for else he is not a *Saint* but a *Stoick*. *Rachel* did well to weep for her children (*there was nature*;) but her fault was she refused to be comforted (*there was discontent.*)

content.) Christ himself was *sensible* when He sweat great drops of blood and said, *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me**; *yet* He was *contented*, and sweetly submitted His Will, *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.* The Apostle bids us *humble our selves under the mighty hand of God**, which we cannot do unless we are sensible of it. * Mat. 26. 39. *2 Pet. 5. 6.

Quest. 2. Whether a Christian may not lay open his grievances to God, and yet be contented?

Answ. Yes: *Unto thee have I opened my cause*, Jer. 20. 12.* and *David poured out his complaint before the Lord**. We may cry to God, and desire Him to write down all our injuries; Shall not the Child complain to his Father? When any burden is upon the spirit, Prayer gives vent, it easeth the heart: *Hannah's* spirit was burdened, *I am* (saies she) *a Woman of a troubled spirit**. * 1 Sam. 1. 2. 17.

Quest. * Jer. 20. 12. *Ps. 142. 2.

Answ.

Now, having prayed and wept, she went away, and was no more sad; only here is the difference between an holy complaint, and a discontented complaint; in the one we complain *to God*; in the other we complain *of God*.

Quest. *Quest.* 3. What is it properly that Contentment doth exclude?

Answ. *Answ.* There are three things which Contentment doth banish out of its Diocess, and can by no means consist with it.

What contentment excludes.

1. It excludes a *vexatious repining*; this is properly the daughter of Discontent, *I mourn in my complaint* *; he doth not say, I murmur in my complaint. Murmuring is no better than mutiny in the heart, it is a rising up against God. When the Sea is rough and unquiet, it casts forth nothing but foam; when the heart is discontented, it casts forth the foam of anger, impatience, and sometimes little better than blas-

* Psa. 55. 2.

phemy.

phemy. Murmuring is nothing elſe but the ſcum which boyls off from a diſcontented heart.

2. It excludes an *uneven diſcompoſure*: When a man ſaith I am in ſuch ſtraights, that I know not how to envolve or get out; I ſhall be undone. Head and heart are ſo taken up, that a man is not fit to pray, or meditate, *&c.* he is not himſelf: juſt as when an Army is routed, one man runs this way, and another that, the Army is put into diſorder; So a mans thoughts run up and down diſtracted. Diſcontent doth diſlocate, and unjoynt the ſoul, it pulls off the wheels.

3: It excludes a *childiſh deſpondency*; and this is uſually conſequent upon the other. A man being in an hurry of mind, not knowing which way to extricate or wind himſelf out of the preſent trouble, begins *ſuccumbere oneri*, to faint and ſink under. For care is to the mind

as a burden to the back, it loads the Spirits, and with overloading ſinks them. A deſplondent ſpirit is a diſcontented ſpirit.

CHAP. VI.

Shewing the Nature of Contentment.

What contentation is.

HAving anſwered theſe Queſtions, I ſhall in the next place come to deſcribe this αὐτάρκεια or Contentment.

It is a ſweet temper of ſpirit, whereby a Chriſtian carries himſelf * in an equal poize in every condition. The nature of this will appear more clear in theſe three Aphoriſms.

* *Se æquanimiter fert.* Bede.

I. *Aphoriſm.* Αὐτάρκεια non acquiſitione, ſed infuſione.

I. Contentment is a *divine thing*; it becomes ours not by *acquiſition*, but *infuſion*; it is a ſlip taken off from the tree of life, and planted by

the

the Spirit of God in the Soul; it is a fruit that grows not in the Garden of Philoſophy, but is of an heavenly birth: It is therefore very obſervable, that *Contentment* is joyned with Godlineſs, and goes in equipage; *But Godlineſs with Contentment is great gain**. Contentment being a conſequent of Godlineſs, or concomitant, or *both*: I call it *divine*, to contradiſtinguiſh it to that Contentment which a moral man may arrive at. Heathens have ſeemed to have this Contentment, but it was only εἰκὼν τῆς ἀρετῆς, the ſhadow and picture of it; the *Beryll*, not the true *Diamond*: theirs was but *civil*, this is *ſacred*: theirs was only from Principles of *Reaſon*, this of *Religion*: theirs was only lighted at Natures Torch, this at the Lamp of Scripture. Reaſon may a little teach Contentment; as thus, Whatever my condition be, this is that I am born to, and if I meet with croſſes, it is

* 1 Tim. 6. 6.

but πάντων φόρτον, a Catholick miſery; all have their ſhare, why therefore ſhould I be troubled *? Reaſon may ſuggeſt this; and indeed, this may be rather *conſtraint*, than *content*: but to live ſecurely and cheerfully upon God in the abatement of creature ſupplies, *Religion* only can bring this into the Souls Exchequer.

* *Ferre quam ſortem omnes patiantur, nemo recuſat.*

2. Aphoriſm. 2. Contentment is an *intrinſecal thing*; it lies within a man; not in the Bark, but the Root. Contentment hath both its Fountain and Stream in the Soul. The Beam hath not its Light from the Air: the Beams of comfort which a contented man hath, do not ariſe *extrinſecè*, from Foreign comforts, but from within. As ſorrow is ſeated in the ſpirit, *The heart knows its own grief* *: So Contentment lies within the Soul, and doth not depend upon externals. Hence I gather, that outward troubles cannot hinder this

* Prov. 14. 10.

this blessed Contentment; it is a spiritual thing and ariseth from spiritual grounds, *viz. The apprehension of Gods Love.* When there is a tempest without, there may be musick within: a Bee may sting through the skin, but it cannot sting to the heart: Outward afflictions cannot sting to a Christians heart, where Contentment lies. Thieves may plunder us of our Money and Plate; but not of this Pearl of Contentment, unless we are willing to part with it; for it is locked up in the *Cabinet of the heart:* The soul which is possessed of this rich treasure of Contentment, is like *Noah* in the Ark, that can sing in the midst of a Delug.

3. Contentment is an *Habitual thing*; it shines with a fixed light in the firmament of the Soul. Contentment doth not appear only now and then, as some Stars which are seen but seldom: it is a settled tem- 3. *Aphorism.*

per of the heart. One action doth not denominate: he is not said to be a liberal man, that gives Alms once in his life; a covetous man may do so; but he is said to be liberal, that is *given to liberality* *; that is, who upon all occasions is willing to indulge the necessities of the poor: so he is said to be a contented man, that is given to contentment. It is not *casual*, but *constant*. *Aristotle* in his Rhetorick, distinguisheth between colours in the face that arise from *passion*, and those which arise from *complexion*; the pale face may look red when it blusheth; but this is only a passion: he is said properly to be ruddy and sanguine, who is constantly so, it is his complexion. He is not a contented man who is so upon an occasion, (and perhaps when he is pleased;) but who is so constantly, it is the habit and complexion of his soul.

* Rom. 12. 13.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Reaſons preſſing to holy Contentment.

HAving opened the nature of Contentment, I come next to lay down ſome Reaſons or Arguments to Contentment, which may preponderate with us.

The firſt is, *Gods Precept:* It is charged upon us as a duty; *Be content with ſuch things as you have**; the ſame God who hath bid us believe, hath bid us be content; if we obey not, we run our ſelves into a ſpiritual *præmunire.* Gods Word is a ſufficient Warrant; it hath *authority* in it, and muſt be a *Supersedeas* or *ſacred Spell* to diſcontent: *Ipſe dixit* was enough among *Pythagoras* his Scholars; *Be it enacted,* is the

Reaſon 1. *Virtute præcepti.*

* Heb. 13. 5.

the Royal ſtile. Gods Words muſt be the ſtar that guides, and His Will the weight that moves our obedience; His *fiat* is a Law, and hath Majeſty enough in it to captivate us into obedience: our hearts muſt not be more unquiet than the raging Sea, which at His Word is ſtill'd *.

*Mat.8.26

Reaſon 2. Virtute Promiſſi.

2. The ſecond Reaſon enforcing Contentment, is, *Gods Promiſe*; for, *He hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee*, Heb. 14. 5. where God hath engaged himſelf under hand and ſeal for our neceſſary proviſions. If a King ſhould ſay to one of his Subjects, I will take care for thee; as long as I have any Crown-Revenues thou ſhalt be provided for; if thou art in danger, I will ſecure thee; if in want, I will ſupply thee; would not that Subject be content? Behold, God hath here made a promiſe to the Believer, and as it were entred into Bond for his ſecurity, *I will never leave thee*: Shall not

his charm down the Devil of Diſcontent? *Leave thy Fatherleſs Children with me, I will preſerve them alive* *. Methinks I ſee the godly man on his Death-bed much diſcontented, and hear him complaining, What will become of my Wife and Children when I am dead and gone? they may come to poverty: Saith God, Trouble not thy ſelf, *be content*, I will take care of thy Children: and, *Let thy Widow truſt in me.* God hath made a Promiſe to us, *That He will not leave us*, and hath entail'd the promiſe upon our *wife* and *Children*; and will not this ſatisfie? True Faith will take Gods ſingle Bond, without calling for Witneſſes.

* Jer. 49. 11.

3. Be contented, *By vertue of a decree.* Whatever our condition be, God the great Umpire of the World hath *ab æterno* decreed that condition for us, and by His Providence ordered all appurtenances thereunto. Let a Chriſtian often think with himſelf,

Reaſon 3. *Virtute Decreti.*

ſelf, who hath placed me here, whe-
ther I am in a higher ſtate, or in a
lower; not Chance or Fortune (a
the purblind Heathens imagined);
no, it is the wiſe God that hath by
His Providence fixed me in this Orb.
We muſt act that ſcene which God
will have us: Say not, Such a one
hath occaſioned this to me; look not
too much at the under-wheel. We
read in *Ezekiel* of *a wheel within a*
* Ezek. 1. 16. *wheel* *; Gods *Decree* is the cauſe of
the turning of the wheels, and His
Providence is the inner-wheel that
moves all the reſt. Gods Providence
is that πηδάλιον or Helm, which turns
about the whole Ship of the Univerſe.
Say then as holy *David, I was ſilent* *
* נאל סהו *becauſe thou, Lord, didſt it* *. God
* Pſ. 39.9. Providence (which is nothing elſe but
the carrying on of His Decree) ſhould
be a *ſuperſedeas* and counterpoiſon
againſt diſcontent: God hath ſet us in
our ſtation, and He hath done it in
wiſdom.

W

We fancy ſuch a condition of life good for us; whereas, if we were our own carvers, we ſhould often cut the * worſt piece. *Lot* being put to his choice did chuſe *Sodom* *, which ſoon after was burnt with fire. *Rachel* was very deſirous of Children, *Give me Children or I die* *; and it coſt her her life in bringing forth a Child. *Abraham* was earneſt for *Iſhmael, O that Iſhmael may live before thee* *! but he had little comfort either of him or his Seed; he was born a Son of ſtrife; *His hand was againſt every man, and every mans hand againſt him.* The Diſciples wept for Chriſts leaving the world, they choſe his corporal preſence; whereas it was beſt for them that Chriſt ſhould be gone, for elſe *the Comforter would not come* *. *David* choſe the life of his child, *he wept and faſted for it* *; whereas if the child had lived, it would have been a perpetual Monument of his name. We ſtand oft in our own light;

* *Iſta elegimus quæ plus nocent quam placent.*

* Gen. 13. 10.

* Gen. 30. 1

* Gen. 17. 18.

* Joh. 16. 7.

* 2 Sam. 12. 16.

light; if we ſhould ſort or parce
out our own comforts, we ſhould hi
upon the wrong. Is it not well fo
the Child that the Parent doth chuſ
for it? were it left to it ſelf, it woul
perhaps chuſe a knife to cut its ow
fingers. A man in a paroxyſm cal
for Wine, which if he had, it were
little better than poyſon: 'Tis we
for the patient that he is at the Phy
ſitians appointment.

The conſideration of a Decree de
termining, and a providence diſpoſin
all things that fall out, ſhould wor
our hearts to holy Contentment
The wiſe God hath ordered ou
Condition: if he ſees it better fo
us to abound, we ſhall abound, i
he ſees it better for us to want, w
ſhall want: Be content to be at God
diſpoſe.

God ſees in his infinite wiſdo
the ſame condition is not *convenien*
for all; that which is good for on
may be bad for another: One ſeaſo

of weather will not ſerve all mens occaſions; one needs *Sun ſhine*, another *Rain*: One condition of life will not fit every man; no more than one Suit of apparel will fit every body: Proſperity is not fit for all, nor yet Adverſity. If one man be brought low, perhaps he can bear it better; he hath a greater ſtock of grace, more Faith and Patience; he can *gather Grapes of Thorns*, pick ſome comfort out of the Croſs; every one cannot do this. Another man is ſeated in an eminent place of dignity; he is fitter for it: perhaps it is a place requires more parts and judgement, which every one is not capable of *; perhaps he can uſe his eſtate better, he hath a publick *heart* as well as a publick *place*. The wiſe God ſees that condition to be bad for one, which is good for another; hence it is He placeth men in different Orbs and Spheres, ſome higher, ſome lower: one man deſires *health*, God ſees

* *Ex omni ligno non fit Mercurius.*

light; if we ſhould ſort or parcel out our own comforts, we ſhould hit upon the wrong. Is it not well for the Child that the Parent doth chuſe for it? were it left to it ſelf, it would perhaps chuſe a knife to cut its own fingers. A man in a paroxyſm calls for Wine, which if he had, it were little better than poyſon: 'Tis well for the patient that he is at the Phyſitians appointment.

The conſideration of a Decree determining, and a providence diſpoſing all things that fall out, ſhould work our hearts to holy Contentment. The wiſe God hath ordered our Condition: if he ſees it better for us to abound, we ſhall abound, if he ſees it better for us to want, we ſhall want: Be content to be at God's diſpoſe.

God ſees in his infinite wiſdom the ſame condition is not *convenient* for all; that which is good for one may be bad for another: One ſeaſon

of weather will not ſerve all mens occaſions; one needs *Sun ſhine*, another *Rain*: One condition of life will not fit every man; no more than one Suit of apparel will fit every body: Proſperity is not fit for all, nor yet Adverſity. If one man be brought low, perhaps he can bear it better; he hath a greater ſtock of grace, more Faith and Patience; he can *gather Grapes of Thorns*, pick ſome comfort out of the Croſs; every one cannot do this. Another man is ſeated in an eminent place of dignity; he is fitter for it: perhaps it is a place requires more parts and judgement, which every one is not capable of *; perhaps he can uſe his eſtate better, he hath a publick *heart* as well as a publick *place*. The wiſe God ſees that condition to be bad for one, which is good for another; hence it is He placeth men in different Orbs and Spheres, ſome higher, ſome lower: one man deſires *health*, God ſees

* *Ex omni ligno non fit Mercurius.*

ſees ſickneſs better for him; God will work health out of ſickneſs, by bringing the *body of death* into a Conſumption: Another man deſires *liberty*, God ſees reſtraint better for him; He will work his liberty by reſtraint; when his feet are bound, his heart ſhall be moſt enlarged. Did we believe this, it would give check to the ſinful diſputes and cavils of our hearts: Shall I be diſcontented at that which is enacted by a Decree, and ordered by a Providence? Is this to be a Child, or a Rebel?

CHAP

CHAP. VIII.

Uſe 1.

Shewing how a Chriſtian may make his life comfortable.

Uſe 1. IT ſhews how a Chriſtian may come to lead a comfortable life, even an Heaven upon Earth, be the times what they will; *viz.* by *Chriſtian Contentment* *; the comfort of life doth not ſtand ἐν τῷ πεϱισσεύειν, in having much; it's Chriſts maxime, *Mans life conſiſteth not in the abundance of things which he doth poſſeſs* *; but it is in being contented *. Is not the Bee as well contented with the feeding on the

Uſe 1. Informat.

* Prov. 15. 13.

* Luke 12. 15.

* *Nullæ profectò majores ſunt divitiæ, quam ſuâ ſorte contentum eſſe, hæc enim virtus efficit, ut id quod habet aliquis, ſit ei ſatis, ſummque animum in paupertate reddat divitem.* Hyperius.

dew, or ſucking from a flower, as the Ox that grazeth on the Mountains? Contentment lies within a man, *in the heart*; and the way to be comfortable, is not by having our Barns filled, but our minds quiet. The contented man (ſaith *Seneca*) is the happy man: Diſcontent is a fretting humour, which dries the Brains, waſtes the ſpirits, corrodes and eats out the comfort of life: Diſcontent makes a man that he doth not *enjoy* what he doth *poſſeſs*. A drop or two of Vinegar will ſour a whole glaſs of Wine. Let a man have the affluence and confluence of worldly comforts, a drop or two of diſcontent will embitter and poiſon all. *Comfort* depends upon *Contentment*. *Jacob* went halting when the ſinew upon the hollow of his thigh ſhrank; ſo when the ſinew of Contentment begins to ſhrink, we go halting in our comforts. Contentation is as neceſſary to keep the life comfortable, a

oyl is neceſſary to keep the lamp burning: The clouds of diſcontent do often drop the ſhowers of tears. Would we have comfort in our lives? we may have it if we will *. A Chriſtian may carve out what condition he will to himſelf *. Why doſt thou complain of thy Troubles? it is not Trouble that troubles, but Diſcontent; it is not the water without the Ship, but the water that gets within the leak, which drowns it: It is not outward affliction that can make the life of a Chriſtian ſad; a contented mind would ſail above theſe waters: but when there's a leak of diſcontent open, and trouble gets into the heart, then it is diſquieted and ſinks: Do therefore as the Mariners, pump the water out, and ſtop this ſpiritual leak in thy ſoul, and no trouble can hurt thee.

* *Quiſque eſt fortunæ ſuæ faber.*
* *Quid vobis opus eſt? fac te ipſe felicem.* Sen.

CHAP. IX.

Uſe 2.

A Check to the diſcontented Chriſtian.

Reproof. *Uſe* 2. HEre is a juſt reproof to ſuch as are diſcontented with their condition. This diſeaſe is almoſt epidemical *. Some not content with their callings which God hath ſet them in, muſt be a ſtep higher, from the *Plough* to the *Throne*, who like the *ſpider* in the *Proverbs*, will *take hold with their hands and be in Kings Palaces*; Proverbs 30. 28. Others from the *Shop* to the *Pulpit* *; they would be in the Temple of *Honour*, before they are in the Temple of *Virtue*; who ſtep into *Moſes* Chair,

* *Quis eſt tam compoſitæ fœlicitatis, ut non aliquâ ex parte cum ſtatûs ſui qualitate rixetur?* Boetius de Conſol. Philoſ. l. 2.

* Num. 12. 2.

Chair, without *Aaron*'s Bells and Pomegranates; like Apes, which do most shew their deformity when they are climbing. Is it not enough that God hath bestowed gifts upon men in private to edifie, that he hath enriched them with many mercies; but, *seek they the Priest-hood also* *? What is this but discontent; arising from high-flown pride? These do secretly tax the Wisdom of God, that he hath not screwed them up in their condition a peg higher. *Tentat superbia, ut frangat.* Every man is complaining that his estate is no better, though he seldom complains that his heart is no better: *Suæ quemque conditionis pœnitet*: One man commends this kind of life, another commends that *; one man thinks a Country-life best, another a City-life; as the Poet elegantly expresseth it.

* Numb. 16. 9.

August.

* *Hic utraque circumfluus vitam cœlibem deflet, ille nuptiis fœlix, orbus liberis alieno censum nutrit hæredi, alius prole lætatus, filii delectis mœstus illachrymat.* Boet.

O fortunati mercatores, gravis annus
Miles ait, multo jam fractus membra labore;
Contrà Mercator navim jactantibus auſtris,
Militia eſt potior, quid enim concurritur horæ
Momento? cita mors venit, aut victoria læta. Hor.

The Souldier thinks it beſt to be a Merchant, and the Merchant to be a Souldier. Men can be content to be any thing but what God will have them. We may cry out with the ſame Poet.

Quî fit, Mecænas, ut nemo quam ſibi ſortem,
Seu ratio dederit, ſeu ſors objecerit, illâ
Contentus vivat? laudet diverſa ſequentes. Hor. 1 Satyr.

How is it that no man is contented? Very

Very few Chriſtians have learned St. *Paul*'s leſſon; neither poor nor rich know how to be content; they can learn any thing but this.

1. If men are poor, they learn to be, 1. *Envious*; they malign thoſe that are above them; anothers proſperity is in an eye-ſore; when Gods Candle ſhines upon their neighbours Tabernacle, this light offends them: In the midſt of wants men can (in this ſenſe) abound; *viz.* in *envy* and *malice*: An *envious* eye is an evil eye. 2. They learn to be *querulous*, ſtill complaining, as if God had dealt hardly with them; they are ever telling of their wants, they want this or that comfort; whereas their greateſt want is a contented ſpirit. Thoſe that are well enough content with their *ſins*, yet are not content with their *condition*.

2. If men are rich, they learn to be *covetous*, thirſting inſatiably after the world, and by any unjuſt

means ſcraping it together; *Their right hand is full of bribes*, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſeth it*. Put a good Cauſe in one ſcale, and a piece of Gold in the other, and the Gold weighs heavieſt. There are (ſaith *Solomon*) four things that ſay, *It is not enough**: I may add a fifth, *viz.* the *heart of a covetous man*: So that neither poor nor rich know how to be content.

* Pſal. 26. 10.

* Prov. 30. 15.

Never certainly ſince the Creation did this ſin of diſcontent *reign*, or rather *rage*, more than in our times; never was God more diſhonoured: you can hardly ſpeak with any, but the paſſion of his tongue betraies the diſcontent of his heart; every one liſps out his trouble, and here even the ſtammering tongue ſpeaks too free and fluently. If we have not what we deſire, God ſhall not have a good look from us, but preſently we are ſick of diſcontent, and ready to die out of an humour. If God will not

give

give the people of *Iſrael* for their luſts, they bid him take their lives; they muſt have Quails to their Manna. *Ahab*, though a King (and one would think his Crown-lands had been ſufficient for him, yet) is ſullen and diſcontented for want of *Naboths* Vineyard. *Jonah*, though a good man and a Prophet, yet ready to die in *a pet* *; and becauſe God kill'd his Gourd, *Kill me too*, ſaid he. *Rachel, Give me Children, or I die:* ſhe had many bleſſings if ſhe could have ſeen them, but wanted this of *contentation.* God will *ſupply our wants*, but muſt He ſatisfie our *luſts* too? Many are diſcontented for a very trifle; another hath a better dreſs, a richer Jewel, a newer faſhion. *Nero* not content with his Empire, was troubled that the Muſitians had more skill in playing than he: how phantaſtick are ſome, that pine away in diſcontent for the want of thoſe things, which if they had, would

* Jonah 4. 8.

would but render them more ridiculous.

CHAP. X.

Use 3.

A Swasive to Contentment.

Use 3. Exhortation.

Use 3. IT exhorts us to labour for Contentation; this is that which doth beautifie and bespangle a Christian, and as a spiritual embroidery, doth set him off in the eyes of the world.

Object. But methinks I hear some bitterly complaining, and saying to me, Alas! how is it possible to be contented! the Lord *hath made my Chain heavy* *, he hath cast me into a very sad condition.

*Lam. 3. 7.

Homer Iliad. 2.

Ἀλλά μοι Αἰγίοχος Χρονίδης Ζεὺς ἄλγε ἔδωκεν.
Ὥς με μετ' ἀπρήκτους ἔριδας καὶ νείκεα βάλλει.

Answ. *Answ.* There is no sin but labours either

either to hide it ſelf under ſome mask; or if it cannot be concealed, then to vindicate it ſelf by ſome Apology. This ſin of Diſcontent I find very witty in its Apologies; which I ſhall firſt diſcover, and then make a Reply. We muſt lay it down for a Rule, That Diſcontent is a *ſin*; ſo that all the Pretences and Apologies wherewith it labours to juſtifie it ſelf, are but the painting and dreſſing of a Strumpet.

SECT. 1.

The firſt Apology that Diſcontent makes, Anſwered.

THe firſt Apology which Diſcontent makes is this; I have loſt a Child. *Paulina* upon the loſs of her Children was ſo poſſeſſed with a ſpirit of ſadneſs, that ſhe had like to have intombed her ſelf in her own diſcontent: 1. *Apol.*

discontent: Our love to *Relation* is oftentimes more than our love to *Religion*.

1. Reply. *Answ.* 1. We must be content, not only when God gives mercies, but when he taketh them away. If we must *in every thing* give thanks, 1 *Thess.* 5. 18. then in nothing be discontented.

2. Reply. 2. Perhaps God has taken away the *Cistern*, that He may give you the more of the *Spring*; He hath darkened the Star-light, that you may have more Sun-light. God intends you shall have more of himself; and, is not He better than *ten Sons?* Look not so much upon a temporal loss, as a spiritual gain; the comforts of the world *run dregs*; those which come out of the Granary of the Promise are purer and sweeter.

3. Reply. * 1 Sam. 1. 28. 3. Your Child was not given, but lent: *I have*, saith *Hanna*, *lent my Son to the Lord**: She lent him! the

Lord

Lord had but lent him to her. Mercies are not entailed upon us, but lent: What a man lends he may call for it again when he pleaſe. God hath put out a Child to thee a while to nurſe, wilt thou be diſpleaſed if He takes His Child home again? O be not diſcontented that a Mercy is taken away from you; but rather be thankful that it was lent you ſo long.

4. Suppoſe your Child be taken from you, either he was good or bad: If he was *rebellious*, you have not ſo much parted with a Child as a burden, you grieve for that which might have been a greater grief to you. If he was *Religious*, then remember, he is taken *from the evil to come* *, and placed in his centre of felicity. This lower Region is full of groſs and hurtful vapours; how happy are thoſe who are mounted into the Celeſtial Orbs! The righteous *is taken away*: in the Original

4. Rem.

* Isa. 57. 1.

נאסה *ginal it is, he is *gathered**; a wicked Child dying is cut off, but the pious Child is gathered. Even as we ſee men gather flowers, and candy them, and preſerve them by them; ſo hath God gathered thy Child as a ſweet flower, that He may candy it with glory, and preſerve it by him for ever. Why then ſhould a Chriſtian be diſcontented? why ſhould he weep exceſſively? *Daughters of Jeruſalem weep not for me; but weep for your ſelves**: So, could we hear our Children ſpeaking to us out of Heaven, they would ſay, weep not for us who are happy, we lie upon a ſoft pillow, even in the boſom of Chriſt; *the Prince of Peace* is embracing us, and kiſſing us with the kiſſes of His lips; be not troubled at our preferment: *weep not for us*, but weep for your ſelves, who are in a ſinful ſorrowful world; you are in the *valley of tears*, but we are on the *Mountains of Spices*: we are gotten

* Luke 23. 28.

gotten to our harbour, but you are ſtill toſſing upon the waves of inconſtancy. O Chriſtian, be not *diſcontented* that thou haſt parted with ſuch a Child, but rather rejoice that thou hadſt ſuch a Child to part with: Break forth into thankfulneſs. What an honour is it to a Parent to beget ſuch a Child, that while he lives, encreaſeth the *joy* of the glorified Angels*; and when he dies, encreaſeth the *number* of the glorified Saints?

* Luke 15. 10. *Lachrymæ pœnitentium ſunt vivum Angelorum.* Bern. ſer. 30. ſuper Cant.

5. If God hath taken away one of your Children, He hath left you more, He might have ſtripped you of all: He took away all *Job*'s comforts, his *eſtate*, his *children*; and indeed his Wife was left, but as a croſs; Satan made a Bow of this rib (as *Chryſoſtom* ſpeaks) and ſhot a Tentation by her at *Job*, thinking to have ſhot him to the heart; *Curſe God and die*, but *Job* had upon him the Breaſt-plate of *Integrity*; and though his Children were taken away, yet not his graces,

5. *Reply.*

graces? ſtill he is content, ſtill he bleſſed God. O think how many mercies you ſtill enjoy! yet our baſe hearts are more diſcontented at one loſs, than thankful for an hundred mercies.

God hath plucked one bunch of Grapes from you; but how many pretious cluſters are left behind?

Object. *Object.* But it was my only child, the ſtaff of my age, the ſeed of my comfort, and the only bloſſom out of which the honour of an ancient Family did grow.

Anſw. *Anſw.* 1. God hath promiſed you (if you belong to him) a name *better than of Sons and daughters**: Is he dead that ſhould have been the monument to have kept up the Name of a Family? God hath given you a *new name*, He hath written your name in the Book of Life; behold your ſpiritual Heraldry; here is a name that cannot be cut off.

* Iſa. 56. 5.

2. Hath

2. Hath God taken away thy *only Child?* He hath given thee His *only Son:* this is a happy exchange. What needs he complain of losses, that hath Christ? He is His Fathers *brightness* *, His *riches* *, His *delight* *. Is there enough in Christ to delight the heart of God? and is there not enough in Him to ravish us with holy delight? He is *wisdom* to teach us, *righteousness* to acquit us, *sanctification* to adorn us, He is δῶρον βασιλικὸν that Royal and Princely gift; He is the *bread of Angels* *, the joy and triumph of Saints; He is τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσι, *all in all* *; why then art thou discontented? though thy Child be lost, yet thou hast Him for whom all things are lost.

* Heb. 1. 3.
* Col. 2. 9.
* Ps. 42. 1.
* *Christus panis angelorum.* Bern.
* Col. 3. 10.

7. And lastly, let us blush to think that Nature should seem to out-strip Grace. *Pulvillus* an Heathen, when he was about to consecrate a Temple to *Jupiter*, and news was brought to him of the death of

7. *Reply.*
Pet. Mart.

his ſon, would not deſiſt from his enterpriſe, but with much compoſure of mind, gave order for decent burial.

SECT. II.

The ſecond Apology Anſwered.

2. *Apol.* 2. APology that diſcontent makes is, I have a great part of my Eſtate ſtrangely melted away, and trading begins to fail.

God is pleaſed ſometimes to bring his Children very low, and cut them ſhort in their eſtate; it fares with them as with that Widow who had nothing in her houſe ſave *a pot of Oyl* *; but be content.

* 2 Kings 4. 2.

1. *Reply.* 1. God hath taken away your *Eſtate*, but not your *portion*. This is a ſacred Paradox. Honour and Eſtate are not part of a Chriſtian's Jointure, they are rather *acceſſaries* than *eſſentials*; and are extrinſecal

and foreign, therefore the loſs of theſe cannot denominate a man miſerable, ſtill the portion remains, *The Lord is my portion, ſaith my ſoul* *. Suppoſe one were worth a Million of Money, and he ſhould chance to loſe a pin off his Sleeve, this is no part of his Eſtate, nor can we ſay he is undone: the loſs of ſublunary comforts, is not ſo much to a Chriſtians portion, as the loſs of a pin is to a Million. *Theſe things ſhall be added to you* *; *Adjicientur*, they ſhall be caſt in as overplus: when a man buys a piece of cloth, he hath an inch or two given into the meaſure: now, though he loſe his inch of cloth, yet he is not undone: for ſtill the whole piece remains: our outward eſtate is not ſo much in regard of the *portion*, as an inch of cloth is to the whole piece; why then ſhould a Chriſtian be diſcontented, when the title to his ſpiritual treaſure remains? a Thief may take away all my Money

* Lam. 3. 24.

* Mat. 6. 22.

that I have about me, but not my Land; ſtill a Chriſtian hath a title to the *land of promiſe*. *Mary* hath choſen the better part, *which ſhall not be taken from her*.

2. *Reply.*

2. Perhaps if thy eſtate had not been loſt, thy ſoul had been loſt *; outward comforts do often quench inward heart. God cannot beſtow a Jewel upon us, but we fall ſo in love with it, that we forget him that gave it; what pity is it that we ſhould commit Idolatry with the creature. God is forc'd ſometimes to drain away an eſtate: the Plate and Jewels are often caſt over-board to ſave the paſſenger. Many a man may curſe the time that ever he had ſuch an eſtate, it hath been an *enchantment* to draw away his heart from God. Some there are that *will be rich* *, and they fall into a *ſnare* *. Art thou trou-

* *Pecuniam perdidiſti fortaſſis illa te perderet manens.*

* 1 Tim. 6. 9.

* *Aliud eſt eſſe divitem, aliud velle fieri divitem; hic cupiditas accuſatur, non aurum.* Bede.

bled

bled that God hath prevented a ſnare? Riches are *Thornes* *: art thou angry that God hath pull'd away a Thorn from thee? Riches are compar'd to *thick clay* *: Perhaps thy affections, which are *the feet of the ſoul*, might have ſtuck ſo faſt in this golden clay, that they could not have aſcended up to Heaven: *be content*, if God dam up our outward comforts, it is that the ſtream of our love may run faſter another way.

* Mat. 13. 7. *Spinæ ſuffocantes & pungentes.*
* Hab. 2. 6.

3. If your eſtate be ſmall, yet God can bleſs a little. 'Tis not how much *money* we have, but how much *bleſſing*. He that often curſeth the bags of Gold*, can bleſs the *meal in the Barrel*, and the *oyl in the Cruſe*. What if thou haſt not the full fleſh-pots? yet thou haſt a promiſe, *I will bleſs her proviſion* *, and then a little goes a great way; be content, thou haſt the dew of a bleſſing diſtill'd: a *dinner of green herbs*, where love is,

3. *Reply.*

* *Ex malè quæſitis vir gaudet tertius hæres.*
* Pſa. 132. 15.

is ſweet, I may add, where the love of God is. Another may have more eſtate than you, but more care; more riches, leſs reſt; more revenues, but withal more occaſions of expence: he hath a greater inheritance, yet perhaps God doth not give him *power to eat thereof* *, he hath the *dominion* of his eſtate, not the *uſe*; he holds more, but enjoyes leſs; in a word, thou haſt leſs Gold than he, haps leſs guilt *.

*Eccl.6.2.

Λεπτῶς, καλῶς ζῆν κρεῖττον ἢ λαμπρῶς, κακῶς, Menand.

* *Lucrum in arcâ, damnum in Conſcientiâ.* Aug. in Serm. Innocent.

4. You did never ſo thrive in your ſpiritual trade; your heart was never ſo low, as ſince your condition was ſo low; you were never *ſo poor in ſpirit*, never *ſo rich in Faith*. You did never run the waies of Gods *Commandments* ſo faſt as ſince ſome of your golden weights were taken off. You never had ſuch Trading for Heaven all your life *; this is *uberrimus*

* *Fœlix mutatio, ubi Deum pro mundo accipimus, pro terrâ Cœlum.*

rimus quæſtus. You did never make ſuch adventures upon the promiſe, as ſince you left off your Sea-adventures. This is the beſt kind of Merchandiſe; O Chriſtian, thou never hadſt ſuch incomes of the Spirit, ſuch ſpring-tides of joy; and what though weak in eſtate, if ſtrong in aſſurance? be content; what you have loſt one way, you have gain'd another.

5. Be your loſſes what they will in this kind, remember in every loſs there is only a *ſuffering*: but in every diſcontent there is a *ſin*, and one ſin is worſe than a thouſand ſufferings. What? becauſe ſome of my *revenues* are gone, ſhall I part with ſome of my *righteouſneſs*? ſhall my Faith and Patience go too? becauſe I do not poſſeſs an Eſtate, ſhall I not therefore poſſeſs my own ſpirit? O learn to be content. 5. *Reply.*

SECT. 3.

The third Apology Answered.

3. *Apol.* THE third Apology is, It is sad with me in my relations; where I should find most comfort, there I have most grief. This Apology or Objection brancheth it self into two particulars; whereto I shall give a distinct Reply.

1. *Branch.* 1. My Child goes on in Rebellion; I fear I have brought forth a Child for the Devil.

1. *Reply.* It is indeed sad to think that Hell should be paved with the skulls of any of our Children: and certainly the *pangs of grief* which the Mother hath in this kind, are worse than *her pangs of travel*; but though you ought to be humbled, yet not discontented: for consider,

2. *Reply.* 1. You may pick something out of your Childs undutifulness: the Childs

Childs ſin is ſometimes the Parents Sermon : *quod dolet, docet :* the undutifulneſs of children to us may be a *memento* to put us in mind of our *undutifulneſs once* to God. Time was when *we* were rebellious children ; how long did our hearts ſtand out as Garriſons againſt God? how long did He parly with us, and beſeech us, ere we would yield ; He walked in the tenderneſs of His heart towards us, but we walked in the frowardneſs of our hearts towards Him ; and ſince grace hath been planted in our ſouls, how much of the wild Olive is ſtill in us? how many motions of the Spirit do we daily reſiſt ; how many unkindneſſes and affronts have we put upon Chriſt? Let this open a Spring of Repentance ; look upon your Childs rebellion, and mourn for your own rebellion.

2. Though to ſee him undutiful is your *grief*, yet not alwaies your *ſin*. 2. *Reply.*

sin. Hath a Parent given the Child, not only the milk of the breast, but *the sincere milk of the Word**? Hast thou seasoned his tender years with Religious education? thou canst do no more; Parents can only work knowledge: God must work grace; they can only lay the wood together, it is God must make it burn; a Parent can only be a guide to shew his Child the way to Heaven, the Spirit of God must be a Load-stone to draw his heart into that way. *Am I in Gods stead* (saith *Jacob*) *who hath withheld the fruit of the womb**? can I give Children? So, is a Parent in Gods stead to give grace? Who can help it, if a Child having the light of Conscience, Scripture, Education, these three Torches in his hand, yet runs wilfully into the deep ponds of sin? Weep for thy Child, pray for him; but do not sin for him, *by discontent.*

* 1 Pet. 2. 2.

* Gen. 30. 2.

3. Say

3. Say not, you have brought forth a Child for the Devil; God can reduce him, He hath promis'd to *turn the heart of the Children to their Parents**, and to open springs of grace in the *Desart**: When any Child is going full-sail to the Devil, God can blow with a contrary wind of his spirit, and alter his course. When *Paul* was breathing out persecution against the Saints, and was sailing Hell-ward, God turns him another way; before he was going to *Damascus*, God sends him to *Ananias*; before a Persecutor, now a Preacher. Though our Children are for the present fallen into the *Devils Pound*, God can turn them from the power of Satan*, and bring them in at the *twelfth* hour. *Monica* was weeping for her Son *Augustine*, at last God gave him in upon prayer, and he became a famous instrument in the Church of God.

3. *Reply.*

* Mal. 4.6.
* Isa. 35. 6.
* Acts 26. 18.

2. The

2. Branch. 2. The second branch of the objection is; But, my husband takes ill courses; where I looked for honey, behold a sting.

Answ. 'Tis sad to have the living and the dead tyed together; yet, let not your heart fret with discontent; mourn for his sin, but do not murmur. For,

1. Reply. 1. God hath placed you in your relation, and you cannot be discontented, but you quarrel with God. What? for every cross that befalls us, shall we call the infinite wisdom of God in question? O the blasphemy of our hearts!

2. Reply. 2. God can make you a gainer by your Husbands sin; perhaps you had never been so good, if he had not been so bad. The fire burns hotteſt in the coldeſt climate: God often by a divine *Antiperistasis* turns the sins of others to our good*, and makes our *maladies* our *medicines*. The more profane the husband

* *Etiam peccatum ipsum in bonum convertit.* Aug. in Rom. 8.

husband is, oft the more holy the wife grows; the more earthly he is, the more heavenly she grows; God makes sometimes the Husbands sin a spur to the Wifes grace. His exorbitances are *quasi flabellum*, as a pair of bellows to blow up the flame of her zeal and devotion the more.

Is it not thus? doth not thy Husbands wickedness send thee to prayer? Thou perhaps hadst never prayed so much, if he had not sinned so much: his deadness quickens thee the more, the stone of his heart is an hammer to break thy heart. The Apostle saith, *The unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing Husband**; but in this sense, the believing wife is sanctified by the unbelieving husband, she grows better; his sin is a whetstone to her grace, and a *medicine* for her security.

* 1 Cor. 7. 14.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

The fourth Apology Answered.

4. *Apol.* THe next Apology that discontent makes, is; But my friends have dealt very unkindly with me, and proved false.

Answ. 'Tis sad when a friend proves * Job 6.15 like a *Brook in Summer* *; The Traveller being parched with heat, comes to the Brook, hoping to refresh himself, but the Brook is dried up: yet be content.

4. *Reply.* 1. You are not alone, others of the Saints have been betrayed by friends; and when they have leaned upon them, they have been as a *foot out of joint.* This was true in * Psal. 55. 12, 13. the Type, *David* *; *It was not an enemy reproached me, but it was thou a man, my equal, my guide and my acquaintance; we took sweet counsel together*; and in the Antitype Christ

He was betrayed by a friend; and why should we think it strange to have the same measure dealt unto us, as Jesus Christ had? *the Servant is not above his Master.* 8.

2. A Christian may often read his sin in his punishment; Hath not he dealt treacherously with God? how oft hath he grieved the Comforter, broken his vows? and through unbelief sided with Satan against God? How oft hath he abused love? taking the Jewels of Gods mercies, and making a Golden Calf of them, serving his own lusts? how oft hath he made the free grace of God, which should have been a bolt to keep out sin, rather a key to open the door to it? these wounds hath the Lord received *in the house of his friend* *. Look upon the unkindness of thy friend, and mourn for thy own unkindness against God: shall a Christian condemn that in another, which he hath been too guilty of himself? 2. *Reply.*

* Zach. 13. 6.

3. Hath

3. *Reply.* 3. Hath thy friend proved treacherous? perhaps you did repoſe too much confidence in him. If you lay more weight upon an houſe, than the pillars will bear, it muſt needs break. God ſaith, *Truſt ye not in a friend**; perhaps you did put more truſt in him, than you did dare to put in God. Friends are as *Venice-glaſſes*, we may uſe them, but if we lean too hard upon them, they will break: Behold matter of humility, but not of ſullenneſs and diſcontent.

* Mic. 7. 5.

3. *Reply.* 4. You have a friend in Heaven will never fail you. *There is a friend* (ſaith *Solomon*) *that ſticketh cloſer than a Brother.* Such a friend is God, He is very ſtudious and inquiſitive in our behalf; He hath a debating with himſelf, a conſulting and projecting how He may do us good; He is the *beſt friend*, which may give contentment in the midſt of all diſcourteſies of friends.

Prov. 18. 14.

Con-

Conſider, 1. He is a *loving friend.* God is love *, hence He is ſaid ſometimes to engrave us on the *palms of His hands*, Iſa. 49. 16. that we may be never out of His eye; and to carry us *in His boſom*, Iſa. 40. 11. near to His heart. There is no ſtop or ſtint in His love; but as the River *Nilus* it overflows all the banks: His love is as far *beyond* our thoughts, as it is above our deſerts, O the infinite love of God, in giving the Son of His love to be made *fleſh* *, which was more than if all the Angels had been made *worms*! God in giving Chriſt to us, gave His very heart to us; here is love pencill'd out in all its glory, and engraven as with the *point of a Diamond.* All other love is hatred in compariſon of the love of our friend.

* 1 Joh. 4. 16.

Iſa. 49. 16.

Iſa. 40. 11.

* *Quantus Deus quantillus factus eſt homo?* Aug.

2. He is a *careful* friend; *He careth for you* *.

* 1 Pet. 5. 7.

1. He minds and tranſacts our buſineſs as his own, he accounts his

peoples intereſts and concernments as his intereſt.

2. He provides for us, grace to enrich us, glory to ennoble us; It was *Davids* complaint, *No man careth for my ſoul* *; a Chriſtian hath a friend that cares for him.

* Pſ. 142. 4.

3. He is a *Prudent friend* *. A friend may ſometimes err through ignorance or miſtake, and give his friend Poiſon inſtead of Sugar; but *God is wiſe in heart* *. He is skilful as well as faithful; He knows what our diſeaſe is, and what Phyſick is moſt proper to apply; He knows what will do us good, and what wind will be beſt to carry us to Heaven.

* Dan. 2. 20.

* Job 9. 4.

4. He is a *Faithful* friend *; and He is faithful, 1. In His promiſes, *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promiſed* *. Gods people are *children that will not lie*; but God is a God that *cannot* lie; He will not deceive the Faith of His people;

* Deut. 7. 9, 10.

* Tit. 1. 2. Iſa. 63. 8.

people; nay, He cannot: He is called ἡ ἀλήθεια, *the Truth*; He can as well ceaſe to be God, as ceaſe to be true. The Lord may ſometimes *change* His Promiſe, (as when He converts a temporal promiſe into a ſpiritual;) but He can never *break* His Promiſe.

5. He is a *Compaſſionate friend.* Hence in Scripture we read of *the yearnings of his bowels* *: Gods friendſhip is nothing elſe but compaſſion; for there is naturally no *affection* in us to deſire His friendſhip, nor no *goodneſs* in us to deſerve it; the Load-ſtone is in himſelf. When we were full of *blood*, He was full of *bowels*: When we were enemies, He ſent an Embaſſage of Peace: When our hearts were turned back from God, His heart was turned towards us. O the tenderneſs and ſympathy of our friend in Heaven! We our ſelves have ſome relentings of heart to thoſe which are in miſery; but

* Jer. 31. 20.

but it is God who begets all the mercies and bowels that are in us, therefore he is called the *Father of mercies* *.

* 2 Cor. 1. 3.

6. He is a *conſtant friend. His compaſſions fail not* *. Friends do often in adverſity drop off as leaves in Autumn *. *Amici circa ſartaginem*, as *Plutarch* ſaith; theſe are rather flatterers than friends: *Joab* was for a time faithful to King *David*'s houſe, he went not after *Abſaloms* Treaſon, but within a while proved falſe to the Crown, and went after the Treaſon of *Adonijah*; God is a friend for ever. *Having loved his own, he loved them to the end* *. What though I am deſpiſed? yet God loves me: What though my friends caſt me off? yet God loves me: he loves εἰς τέλος, to the end, and there is no end of that love.

* Lam. 3. 22.

* *Dum fueris fœlix, multos numerabis amicos: Nubila ſi fuerint tempora ſolus eris.*

* 1 Kings 1. 7.

* εἰς τέλος ἠγάπησεν. Joh. 13. 1.

This methinks, in caſe of diſcourteſies, and unkindneſſes, is enough to charm down diſcontent.

SECT.

SECT. 5.

The fifth Apology Answered.

THE next Apology is, I am under great reproaches *. Let not this discontent; For,

5. *Apol.*

* *Deteriores sunt qui famam corrumpunt, quàm qui prædia diripiunt.* Greg.

1. It is a sign there is some good in thee; *Quid mali feci?* saith *Socrates*, what evil have I done, that this bad man commends me? The *applause* of the wicked usually denotes some evil, and their *censure* imports some good *. *David* wept and fasted, and that was *turned to his reproach* *; as we must pass to Heaven through the *pikes* of suffering, so through the clouds of Reproach.

1. *Reply.*

* Ps. 16. 20
* Ps. 69. 10

2. If your Reproach be for God, as *David*'s was, *For thy sake I have born reproach* *; then it is rather matter of *triumph*, than Dejection: Christ doth not say, when you are

2. *Reply.*

* Ps. 69. 7.

reproached, *be diſcontented*; but χάιρε-τε, *Rejoyce* *. Wear your reproach as a Diadem of honour, for now a *Spirt of Glory reſts upon you* *. Put your reproaches into the Inventory of your riches; ſo did *Moſes* *. It ſhould be a Chriſtians ambition to wear his Saviours Livery, though it be ſprinkled with blood, and ſullied with diſgrace.

* Mat. 5. 12.

* 1 Pet. 4. 14.

* Heb. 11. 26.

3. God will do us *good* by reproach *; as *David* ſaid of *Shimei* his curſing, *It may be the Lord will requite good for his curſing this day* *; this puts us upon ſearching out ſin. A child of God labours to read his ſin in every ſtone of reproach that is caſt at him; beſides, now we have an opportunity to exerciſe patience and humility *.

3. *Reply.* * *Boni per contumelias meliores exiſtunt.* Greg. in Hom. * 2 Sam. 16. 12. * *Detractione patientia noſtra probatur.* Aug. l. 3. contr. Per. l.

4. Jeſus Chriſt was content to be reproached for us; *He deſpiſed the ſhame of the Croſs* *. It may amaze us to think, that He who was God could endure to be ſpit upon, to be crowned

4. *Reply.* * Heb. 11. 2.

crowned with Thorns *in a kind of jeer*; and when He was ready to *bow* His head upon the Croſs, to have the Jews in ſcorn *wag their* heads, and ſay, *He ſaved others, himſelf He cannot ſave.* The *ſhame* of the Croſs, was as much as the *blood* of the Croſs: His *Name* was crucified before His *Body.* The ſharp arrows of *Reproach*, that the world did ſhoot at Chriſt, went deeper into His heart than the Spear; His ſuffering was ſo ignominious, that as if the Sun did bluſh to behold, it withdrew its bright beams, and maſqued it ſelf with a cloud; (and well it might, when the Sun of righteouſneſs was in an eclipſe;) all this contumely and reproach did the God of glory *endure*, or rather *deſpiſe* for us. Oh then, let us be content to have our names eclipſed for Chriſt; let not reproach lie at our heart, but let us bind it as a Crown about our head. Alas, what is reproach? this

is but *ſmall ſhot*, how will men ſtand in the mouth of the Cannon? thoſe who are diſcontented at a reproach, will be offended at a Faggot.

5. *Reply.* 5. Is not many a man contented to ſuffer reproach for maintaining his luſt? and ſhall not we for maintaining the Truth? Some *Glory in* * Phil. 3. 19. *that which is their ſhame* *: and ſhall we be aſhamed of that which is our glory? Be not troubled at theſe petty things: he whoſe heart is once divinely touched with the Load-ſtone of Gods Spirit, doth account it his honour to be diſhonoured * Act. 15. 4 for Chriſt *; and doth as much deſpiſe the worlds cenſure, as he doth their praiſe.

6. *Reply.* 6. We live in an Age, wherein men dare reproach God himſelf. The *Divinity* of the Son of God is blaſphemouſly reproached by the *Socinian*; The bleſſed *Bible* is reproach'd by the *Anti ſcripturiſt*, a if it

it were but a *legend of lies*, and every mans Faith a fable; The *Juſtice* of God is called to the Bar of Reaſon by the *Arminian*; the *Wiſdom* of God in his providential actings, is taxed by the *Atheiſt*; The *Ordinances* of God are decryed by the *Familiſt*, as being too heavy a burden for a *free-born* conſcience; and too low, and carnal for a ſublime Seraphick ſpirit; The *waies* of God, which have the Majeſty of holineſs ſhining in them, are calumniated by the *Profane*; The mouthes of men are open againſt God, as if he were an *hard Maſter*, and the path of Religion too ſtrict and ſevere. If men cannot give God a good word, ſhall we be diſcontented or troubled, that they ſpeak hardly of us? Such as labour to bury the glory of Religion, ſhall we wonder that their throats are *open Sepulchres* *, to bury our good name? Oh let us be contented while we are in Gods ſcouring-houſe,

* Rom. 3. 13.

to

to have our names ſullied a little; the blacker we ſeem to be here, the brighter ſhall we ſhine when God hath ſet us upon the Celeſtial ſhelf.

SECT. 6.

The ſixth Apology Anſwered.

6. Apol. THE ſixth Apology that Diſcontent makes, is diſreſpect in the world. I have not that eſteem from men, as is ſuitable to my quality and graces. And doth this trouble? Conſider,

1. Reply. 1. The world is an unequal Judge; as it is full of *change*, ſo of *partiality*. The world gives her *Reſpects* as ſhe doth her *places of preferment*, more by favour often, than deſert. Haſt thou the ground of real worth in thee? that is beſt worth that is in him that *hath* it; Honour is in him that *gives* it *: better deſerve reſpect, and

* *Honor eſt in honorante.*

and not have it, than have it, and not deſerve it.

2. Haſt thou grace? God reſpects thee, and His judgement is beſt worth prizing. A Believer is a perſon of honour, being *born of God.* Since thou waſt *pretious* in mine eyes, *thou haſt been honourable, and I have loved thee* *. Let the world think what they will of you; perhaps in their eyes you are a *caſt-away*; in Gods eyes a *Dove* *, a *Spouſe* *, a *Jewel* *; others account you the dregs and off-ſcouring of the world *, but God will give *whole Kingdoms for your ranſom* *. Let this content; no matter with what oblique eyes I am looked upon in the world, if I am *rectus in curiâ*, God thinks well of me. 'Tis better that God approve, than man applaud. The world may put us in their *Rubrick*, and God put us in His black Book. What is a man the better, that his fellow-priſoners commend him, if his Judge condemn him?

2. *Reply.*

* Iſa. 43.4

* Can. 2. 14.
* Can. 5. 1.
* Mal. 3. 17.
* 1 Cor. 4. 14.
* Iſa. 43. 5.

him? Oh labour to keep in with God, prize his love: let my fellow-subjects frown, I am Contented, being a Favourite of the King of heaven.

3. *Reply.* 3. If we are the children of God, we must look for disrespect; a believer is *in* the world, but not *of* the world: we are here in a Pilgrim condition, out of our own Country, therefore must not look for the respects and acclamations of the world; it is sufficient that we shall have honour in our own Country*; 'Tis dangerous to be the worlds Favourite.

* Heb. 13. 14.

4. *Reply.* 4. Discontent arising from disrespect, savours too much of pride; an humble Christian hath a lower opinion of himself than others can have of him. He that is taken up about the thoughts of his sins, and how he hath provoked God, he cries out as *Agur*, *I am more brutish than any man**; and therefore is contented, though

* Pro. 30. 2.

though he be ſet *among the dogs of the flock* *. Though he be low in the thoughts of others, yet he is thankful, that he is not laid *in the loweſt Hell* *. A proud man ſets an high value upon himſelf; and is angry with others, becauſe they will not come up to his price. Take heed of pride; O had others a window to look into thy breaſt, (as *Crates* once expreſſed it) or did thy heart ſtand where thy face doth, thou wouldſt wonder to have ſo much reſpect.

* Job 30. 1.

* Pſ. 86. 13.

SECT. 7.

The ſeventh Apology Anſwered.

THE next Apology is, I meet with very great ſufferings for the truth *. Conſider,

7. *Apol.*

* *Scala aurea ad cœlum, ſed circum ſepta gladiis.*

1. Your *ſufferings* are not ſo great as your *ſins*; Put theſe two in the ballance, and ſee which weighs heavieſt;

1. *Reply.*

vieſt; where ſin lies heavy, ſufferings lie light. A carnal ſpirit makes more of his ſufferings, and leſs of his ſins; he looks upon one at the great end of the Perſpective, but upon the other at the little end of the Perſpective. The carnal heart cries out, Take away the *Frogs*; but a gracious heart cries, take away the *iniquity**. The one ſaith, never any one ſuffered as I have done: but the other ſaith, never any one ſinned as I have done*.

2 Sam. 24. 10.

* Mic. 7. 9.

2. *Reply.* 2. Art thou under ſufferings? thou haſt an opportunity to ſhew the valour and conſtancy of thy mind; ſome of Gods Saints would have accounted it a great favour, to have been honoured with Martyrdom. One ſaid, I am in priſon, *till* I am in priſon; thou counteſt that a trouble, which others would have worn as an Enſign of their glory.

3. *Reply.* 3. Even thoſe who have gone only upon moral principles, have ſhewn

ſhewn much conſtancy and contentment in their ſufferings. *Curtius* being bravely mounted, and in Armour, threw himſelf into a great Gulf, that the City of *Rome* might according to the Oracle be deliver'd from the Peſtilence; and we having a Divine Oracle, *That they who kill the body, cannot hurt the ſoul,* ſhall we not with much conſtancy and patience devote our ſelves to injuries for Religion, and rather ſuffer for the truth, than the truth ſuffer for us? The *Decii* among the *Romans* vowed themſelves to death, that their Legions and Souldiers might be crowned with the honour of the Victory. O what ſhould we be content to ſuffer to make the truth victorious! *Regulus* * having ſworn that he would return to *Carthage* (though he knew there was a furnace heating for him there) yet not daring to infringe his Oath, he did adventure to go; we then who are Chriſtians, having made

*Pet. Mart.

made a vow to Christ in Baptism, and so oft renewed it in the blessed Sacrament, should with much contentation rather chuse to suffer than violate our sacred Oath. Thus the blessed Martyrs, with what courage and cheerfulness did they yield up their Souls to God? and when the fire was set to their bodies, yet their spirits were not at all fired with passion or discontent. Though others hurt the *Body*, let them not the *Mind* through discontent; shew by your heroick courage that you are above those troubles which you cannot be without.

SECT. 8.

The eighth Apology Answered.

8. *Apol.* THE next Apology is, The prosperity of the wicked. *Answ.* I confess 'tis so often, that the evil enjoy all

all the good, and the good endure all the evil. *David*, though a good man, ſtumbled at this, and had like to have fallen *; well, be contented; for remember: * Pſa. 73. 2.

1. Theſe are not the only things, nor the beſt things; they are mercies without the pale; theſe are but acorns with which God feeds ſwine; you who are believers, have more choice fruit, the *Olive*, the *Pomgranate*, the fruit which grows on the *true Vine* Jeſus Chriſt; others have the fat of the Earth, you have the dew of Heaven; they have a South-land; you have thoſe ſprings of living-water which are clarified with Chriſts blood, and indulcorated with his love. 1. *Reply.*

2. To ſee the wicked flouriſh, is matter rather of *pity* than envy; 'Tis all the Heaven they muſt have. *Wo to you rich men, for ye have received your conſolation**. Hence it was that *David* made it his ſolemn prayer, *Deliver me from the wicked, from men* 2. *Reply.* * Luke 6. 24. Pſa. 17. 14.

of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure, Psalm 17. 14. The words (methinks) are *Davids Litany*; from men of the World which have their portion in this life, *good Lord deliver me.* When the wicked have eaten of their dainty dishes, there comes in a sad reckoning which will spoil all. The World is first *musical*, and then *tragical:* if you would have a man fry, and blaze in hell, let him have enough of the *fat of the Earth.* O remember, for every sand of mercy that runs out to the wicked, God puts a drop of wrath into his Vial. Therefore as that Souldier said to his Fellow, Do you envy me my Grapes? they cost me dear, I must die for them. So I say, Do you envy the wicked? alas, their prosperity is like *Haman's* Banquet before execution. If a man were to be hanged, would one envy to see him walk to the Gallows through pleasant

pleaſant fields, and fine galleries, or to ſee him go up the ladder in cloth of gold? The wicked may flouriſh in their bravery a while; but, when *they flouriſh as the graſs, it is, that they ſhall be deſtroyed for ever* *. This proud graſs ſhall be mown down. Whatever a ſinner enjoys, he hath a curſe with it *; and ſhall we envy? What if poiſoned bread be given to dogs? The long furrows in the backs of the godly, have a *ſeed of bleſſing* in them when the table of the wicked becomes a ſnare, and their honor their halter.

* Pſ. 92.7.

* Mal. 2.2.

SECT. 9.

The ninth Apology Anſwered.

2. THe next Apology that diſcontent makes for it ſelf, is *the evil of the times*. The times are full of Hereſie and Impiety, and this is that which troubles me. This Apology

9. Apol.

consists of two branches, to which I shall answer in *specie*; and,

1. *Branch.* The Heresie of the times.

1. The times are full of Heresie. This is indeed sad, when the Devil cannot by violence destroy the Church, he endeavours to poison it; when he cannot with *Sampsons* Fox-tails set the Corn on fire, then he sows tares: as he labours to destroy the peace of the Church by *Division*, so the truth of it by *Errour*; we may cry out with *Seneca*, *Verè vivimus in temporum fæcibus*, we live in times wherein there is a sluce open to all novel opinions, and every mans *opinion* is his *Bible*. Well, this may make us mourn, but let us not murmur through discontent: Consider,

1. *Reply.*

1. Errour makes a discovery of men,

1. 1. *Bad men*: Error discovers such as are tainted and corrupt. When the Leprosie brake forth in the forehead, then was the *Leper* discovered.

Error

Error is a ſpiritual Baſtard; the Devil is the Father, and pride the Mother; you never knew an erroneous man, but he was a proud man: now, it is good that ſuch men ſhould be laid open; to the intent, firſt, that Gods righteous Judgments upon them may be adored*; Secondly, that others who are free, be not infected. If a man have the Plague, it is well it breaks forth; for my part, I would avoid an Heretick as I would avoid the Devil, for he is ſent on his errand. I appeal to you, if there were a Tavern in this City, where under a pretence of ſelling Wine, many Hogſheads of Poiſon were to be ſold, were it not well that others ſhould know of it, that they might not buy? It is good that thoſe who have poiſoned opinions ſhould be known, that the people of God may not come near, either the ſcent or taſte of that poiſon.

*2 Theſ. 2. 12.

2. Error is a *Touch-ſtone* to diſco-

ver *good men*, it tries the gold: *There must be Hereſies, that they which are* δόκιμοι *approved, may be made manifeſt* *. Thus our love to Chriſt, and zeal for truth doth appear. God ſhews who are the living fiſh, *viz.* ſuch as ſwim againſt the ſtream; who are the ſound ſheep, *viz.* ſuch as feed in the green paſtures of the Ordinances; who are the Doves, *viz.* ſuch as live in the beſt air, where the Spirit breaths: God ſets a Garland of honour upon theſe; *Theſe are they which came out of great tribulation* *. So, theſe are they that have oppoſed the Errours of the times; theſe are they that have preſerved the virginity of their conſcience; who have kept their judgement ſound, and their heart ſoft. God will have a Trophy of honour ſet upon ſome of his Saints; they ſhall be renowned for their ſincerity, being like the Cypreſs, *quæ viriditatem in hyeme non amittit* *, which keeps its greenneſs and

* 1 Cor. 11. 14.

* Rev. 7. 14.

* Ambroſe.

and freſhneſs in the Winter ſeaſon.

2. Be not ſinfully diſcontented; for God can make the errours of the Church advantageous to truth. Thus the truths of God have come to be more beaten out and confirmed; as it is in *Law*, one man lying a falſe title to a piece of Land, the true title hath by this means been the more ſearched into and ratified; ſome had never ſo ſtudied to defend the truth by *Scripture*, if others had not endeavoured to overthrow it by *Sophiſtry*; all the miſts and fogs of error that have riſen out of the bottomleſs pit, have made the glorious Sun *of truth* to ſhine ſo much the brighter. Had not *Arius* and *Sabellius* broached thoſe damnable Errours, the truth of thoſe queſtions about the bleſſed *Trinity*, had never been ſo diſcuſſed and defended by *Athanaſius*, *Auguſtine*, and others; had not the Devil brought in ſo much of his 2. *Reply.*

princely darkneſs, the Champions for Truth had never run ſo faſt to Scripture to light their Lamps. So that God who hath a *wheel within a wheel*, over-rules theſe things wiſely, and turns them to the beſt. Truth is an Heavenly plant that ſettles by ſhaking.

3. *Reply. Etiam vamenta auri pretioſa.*

3. God raiſeth the price of his truth the more; the very ſhreds and filings of truth are venerable. When there is much counterfeit metal abroad, we prize the true Gold the more: the pure Wine of truth is never more pretious, than when unſound Doctrines are broached and vented.

4. *Reply.*

Error makes us more thankful to God for the Jewel of truth. When you ſee another infected with the Plague, how thankful are you, that God hath freed you from the infection? when we ſee others have the *Leproſie in the Head*, how thankful are we to God, that he hath not given

given us over to believe a lye, and so be damned? It is a good use that may be made even of the Errour of the times, when it makes us more humble and thankful, adoring the free grace of God, who hath kept us from drinking of that deadly poyson.

2. The second branch of the Apology that discontent makes, is the *impiety of the times.* I live and converse among the profane; *O that I had wings like a Dove, that I might flye away and be at rest* *! *Answ.* It is indeed sad to be mixed with the wicked, *David beheld the transgressors, and was grieved* *; and *Lot* (who was a bright Star in a dark night) was *vexed*, or as the word in the Original may bear, *wearied out* *, ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν ἀθέσμων ἐν ἀσελγείᾳ ἀναστροφῆς, *with the unclean conversation of the wicked* *; he made the sins of *Sodom spears* to pierce his own Soul; we ought (if there be any spark of divine love in us) to be very sensible of the

2. *Branch of the Apology.* The impiety of the times.

* Ps. 55.6.

* Ps. 119. 58.

* Καταποιούμενος.

* 2 Pet. 2.7.

the ſins of others, and to have our hearts bleed for them? yet let us not break forth in murmuring or diſcontent, knowing that God in his providence hath permitted it, and ſurely not without ſome reaſons; For,

1. *Reply.* 1. The Lord makes the wicked an hedge to defend the godly; the wiſe God often makes thoſe who are *wicked* and *peaceable*, a means to ſafeguard his people from thoſe who are *wicked* and *cruel*. The King of *Babylon* kept *Jeremy*, and gave ſpecial order for his looking to, that he did want nothing *. God ſometimes makes *brazen ſinners* to be *brazen walls* to defend his people.

* Jer. 35. 11, 12.

2. *Reply.* 2. God doth interline and mingle the wicked with the godly, that the godly may be a means to ſave the wicked; ſuch is the *beauty of holineſs*, that it hath a magnetical force in it, to allure and draw even the wicked. Sometimes God makes a believing husband a means to convert an unbelieving wife,

wife, and *è contra: What knoweſt thou, O wife, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy husband? Or how knoweſt thou, O man, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy wife* *? The godly living among the wicked, by their prudent advice and pious example, have won them to the embracing of Religion; if there were not ſome godly among the wicked, how, in a probable way without a miracle, can we imagine that the wicked ſhould be converted? Thoſe who are now ſhining Saints in Heaven, ſometimes *ſerved divers luſts* *. *Paul* once a Perſecutor; *Auguſtine* once a Manichee; *Luther* once a Monk; but by the ſevere and holy carriage of the godly, were converted to the Faith.

* 1 Cor. 7. 16.

* Tit. 3. 3.

SECT.

SECT. X.

The tenth Apology answered.

10. *Apology.* THe next Apology that Discontent makes, is lowness of parts and gifts.

I cannot, saith the Christian, discourse with that fluency, nor pray with that elegancy as others.

1. *Reply.* *Ans.* 1. *Grace is beyond Gifts*; Thou compareſt thy Grace with anothers Gifts, there is a vaſt difference; Grace without Gifts is infinitely better than Gifts without Grace; in Religion, the *vitals* are beſt; Gifts are a more extrinſecal and common work of the Spirit, which is incident to reprobates; grace is a more diſtinguiſhing work, and is a Jewel hung only upon the Elect. Haſt thou the *ſeed of God*, the *holy anointing?* be content.

I. Thou

I. Thou ſayeſt thou canſt not diſcourſe with that fluency as others.

Anſw. Experiments in Religion are beyond notions, and *impreſſions* beyond *expreſſions*. *Judas* (no doubt) could make a learned diſcourſe of Chriſt, but well fare the woman in the Goſpel, that felt virtue coming out of him *. A ſanctified heart is better than a ſilver tongue. There is as much difference between gifts and grace, as between a Tulip painted on the wall, and one growing in the Garden.

* Luke 8. 47.

II. Thou ſayeſt, thou canſt not pray with that elegancy as others.

Anſw. Prayer is a matter more of the *heart* than the *head*. In prayer it is not ſo much *fluency* prevails, as *fervency* *; nor is God ſo much taken with the elegancy of ſpeech, as the efficacy of the Spirit. Humility is better than volubility; here the *Mourner* is the *Orator*, ſighs and groans are the beſt Rhetorick.

* Ja. 5. 16. Δέησις ἐνεργουμένη.

2. Be

2. *Reply.* 2. Be not discontented; For, God doth usually proportion a mans parts to the place where he calls him: some are set in a higher sphere and function, their place requires more parts and abilities; but the most inferiour member is useful in its place, and shall have a power delegated for the discharge of its peculiar office.

SECT. 11.

The eleventh Apology Answered.

11. *Apo.* THE next Apology is, *The troubles of the Church.* Alas, my disquiet and discontent is not so much for my self as the publick. The Church of God suffers.

Answ. I confess it is sad, and we ought for this *to hang our Harp upon* Psal. 137. *the Willow**; he is a wooden leg in Christs body, that is not sensible of the state of the body. As a Christian must

muſt not be *proud fleſh*, ſo neither *dead fleſh*. When the Church of God ſuffers, he muſt ſympathize: *Jeremiah wept for the Virgin Daughter of Sion.* We muſt feel our brethrens hard Cords through our ſoft Beds; in Muſick, if one ſtring be touched all the reſt ſound; when God ſtrikes upon our brethren, *our bowels muſt ſound as an Harp* *; be ſenſible, but do not give way to diſcontent. For conſider, * If. 16. 11.

1. *God ſits at the Stern of His Church* *; Sometimes it is as a Ship toſſed upon the Waves, *O thou afflicted and toſſed* *; but cannot God bring this Ship to Heaven, though it meet with a Storm upon the Sea? The Ship in the Goſpel was toſſed, becauſe *ſin* was in it; but it was not overwhelmed, becauſe *Chriſt* was in it. Chriſt is in the Ship of his Church, fear not ſinking: The Churches Anchor is caſt in Heaven. Do not we think God loves his Church, 1. *Reply.* * Pſ. 46. 5. * If. 54. 12.

Church, and takes as much care of it as we can? The names of the twelve Tribes were on *Aarons breaſt*; ſignifying how near to Gods heart his people are: They are his *portion**, and ſhall that be loſt? His *glory**, and ſhall that be finally Eclipſed? No certainly. God can deliver his Church, not only *from* but *by* oppoſition. The Churches pangs ſhall help forward her deliverance.

* Deut. 32. 9.
* Iſ. 46. 13.

2. Reply. 2. *God hath alwaies propagated Religion by ſufferings.* The foundation of the Church hath been laid *in blood**, and theſe ſanguine ſhowers have ever made it more fruitful. *Cain* put the knife to *Abel*'s throat, and ever ſince the Churches veins have bled; but ſhe is like the *Vine*, which by bleeding grows; and like the Palm-tree, which may have this Motto, *Percuſſa reſurgit*, the more weight is laid upon it, the higher it riſeth. The holineſs and patience of the Saints

* *Sanguine fundata eſt Eccleſia, ſanguine crevit.*

Saints under their perſecutions, hath much added both to the *growth* of Religion and the *Crown*. *Baſil* and *Tertullian* obſerve of the primitive Martyrs, that divers of the Heathens ſeeing their zeal and conſtancy, turned Chriſtians. Religion is that *Phœnix* which hath always revived and flouriſhed *in the aſhes* of holy men: *Iſaiah* ſawn aſunder; *Peter* crucified at *Jeruſalem* with his Head downwards *; *Cyprian* Biſhop of *Carthage*, * Euſeb. *Polycarp* of *Smyrna*, both martyr'd for Religion: Yet evermore the Truth hath been *ſealed* by blood, and gloriouſly diſperſed; whereupon *Julian* did forbear to perſecute, *non ex clementia, ſed invidia*; not out of piety, but envy; becauſe the Church grew ſo faſt, and multiplyed, as *Nazianzen* well obſerves.

SECT. XII.

The twelfth Apology Answered.

12 *Apol.* THe twelfth Apology that Discontent makes for it self, is this: It is not my Trouble that troubles me, but it is my sins that do disquiet and discontent.

Answ. Be sure it be so; do not prevaricate with God and thy own Soul: In true mourning for sin, when the present suffering is removed, yet the sorrow is not removed; but suppose the Apology be real, and *sin* is the ground of your discontent; yet I answer, a mans disquiet about sin may be beyond its bounds in these three cases.

1. *Reply. Dolor examinans.* 1. When it is *disheartning*; that is, when it sets up sin above mercy. If *Israel* had only pored upon their sting, and not looked up to the *brazen*

zen Serpent, they had never been healed. That ſorrow for ſin which drives us away from God, is not without ſin; for there is more *deſpair* in it than *remorſe*: The ſoul hath ſo many tears in its eyes that it cannot ſee Chriſt. Sorrow as ſorrow doth not ſave (that were to make a Chriſt of our tears,) but is uſeful as it is preparatory in the ſoul, making ſin *vile*, and Chriſt *pretious*. Oh look up to the brazen Serpent, *the Lord Jeſus*; a ſight of his blood will revive; the Medicine of his *merits* is broader than our ſore.

It is Satans policy, either to keep us from ſeeing our ſins, or if we will needs ſee them, that we may *be ſwallowed up of ſorrow**? Either he would *ſtupifie* us, or *affright* us; either keep the glaſs of the Law from our eyes, or elſe penſil out our ſins in ſuch crimſon colours, that we may ſink in the *quick-ſands* of deſpair. * Cor. 2. 27.

2. *Dolor impediens.*

2. When ſorrow is *indiſpoſing*, it untunes the Heart for prayer, meditation, holy conference; it cloiſters up the ſoul: This is not ſorrow, but rather ſullenneſs, and doth render a man not ſo much *penitential* as *Cynical.*

3. *Dolor intempeſtivus.*

3. When it is *out of ſeaſon*; God bids us *rejoyce*, and we *hang our Harps upon the Willows*; he bids us *truſt*, and we caſt our ſelves down, and are brought even to the margin of deſpair. If Satan cannot keep us from mourning, he will be ſure to put us upon it when it is leaſt in ſeaſon.

When God calls us in a ſpecial manner to be thankful for mercy, and put on our white Robes, then Satan will be putting us into mourning, and inſtead of a *garment* of *praiſe*, cloath us with a *Spirit of heavineſs*; ſo God loſeth the acknowledgement of a mercy, and we the comfort.

If

If thy ſorrow hath tuned and fitted thee for Chriſt, if it hath raiſed in thee high prizings of him, ſtrong hungrings after him, ſweet delight in him; this is as much as God requires, and a Chriſtian doth but ſin to vex and torture himſelf further upon the wrack of his own diſcontent.

And thus I hope I have anſwered the moſt material Objections and Apologies which this ſin of Diſcontent doth make for it ſelf. I ſee no reaſon why a Chriſtian ſhould be diſcontented, unleſs for his diſcontent. Let me in the next place propound ſomething which may be both as a Loadſtone and a Whetſtone to Con-[illegible]ntation,

CHAP. XI.

Divine motives to Contentment.

AND so I proceed to the Arguments or Motives that may quicken to Contentment.

SECT. I.

The first Argument to Contentment.

The first Argument to Contentation.

1. CONsider the excellency of it. Contentment is a flower that doth not grow in every Garden; it teacheth a man how in the midst of want to abound. You would think it were excellent if I could prescribe a Receipt or Antidote against Poverty;

verty; but behold, here is that which is more excellent, for a man to want, and yet have enough; this alone contentment of Spirit brings. Contentation is πᾶν φάρμακον, a remedy againſt all our troubles, a *levamen* to all our burdens; it is the *cure* of *care.*

Contentation, though it be not properly a *Grace* (it is rather a *diſpoſition of mind*) yet in it there is *optimum temperamentum*, an happy temperature and mixture of all the Graces: It is a moſt pretious compound, which is made up of *Faith*, *Patience*, *Meekneſs*, *Humility*, *&c.* which are the ingredients put into it. Now there are in *ſpecie* theſe ſeven rare excellencies in Contentment.

1. A contented Chriſtian *carries Heaven about him*: For what is Heaven, but that ſweet repoſe and full contentment that the ſoul ſhall have in God? In contentment there is the firſt-fruits of Heaven. 1. *Excellency of Contentation.*

There are two things in a contented ſpirit which makes it like Heaven.

1. *Ibi Deus.* 1. *God is there*: Something of God is to be ſeen in that Heart. A diſcontented Chriſtian is like a rough tempeſtuous Sea; when the water is rough you can ſee nothing there; but when it is ſmooth and ſerene, then you may behold your face in the water *: When the Heart rageth through diſcontent, it is like a rough Sea; you can ſee nothing there unleſs paſſion and murmuring; there is nothing of God; nothing of Heaven in that Heart: but by virtue of Contentment 'tis like the Sea when it is ſmooth and calm; there is *a face ſhining there*; you may ſee ſomething of Chriſt in that Heart, a repreſentation of all the graces.

* Prov. 27. 19.

2. *Ibi requies.* 2. *Reſt is there*: O what a Sabbath is kept in a contented Heart! What an Heaven! A contented Chriſtian is like *Noah* in the Ark; though

though the Ark were toſſed with Waves, *Noah* could ſit and ſing in the Ark. The ſoul that is gotten into the *Ark of Contentment* ſits quiet, and ſails above all the Waves of trouble; he can ſing in this ſpiritual Ark. The wheels of the Chariot move, but the Axle-tree ſtirs not: The circumference of the Heavens is carried about the Earth, but the Earth moves not out of his Centre. When we meet with motion and change in the creatures round about us, a contented ſpirit is not ſtirred or moved out of its centre. The ſails of a Mill move with the Wind, but the Mill it ſelf ſtands ſtill: An Emblem of Contentment. When our outward eſtate moves with the wind of Providence, yet the Heart is ſettled through Holy contentment; and when others are like Quick-ſilver, ſhaking and trembling through diſquiet, the contented ſpirit can ſay as *David*, *O God, my Heart is fixed,*

my

Pſ. 57. 7. *my heart is fixed*: What is this but a piece of Heaven?

2. *Excellency.* 2. What ever is defective in the creature is made up in *Contentment*. A Chriſtian may want the comforts that others have, the land and poſſeſſions; but God hath diſtilled into his Heart that contentment which is far better: In this ſenſe that is true of our Saviour, *He ſhall have in this life an hundred fold**. Perhaps he that ventured all for Chriſt never hath his houſe or land again; I, but God gives him a *contented ſpirit*, and this breeds ſuch joy in the ſoul as is infinitely ſweeter than all his houſes and lands which he left for Chriſt. It was ſad with *David*, in regard of his outward comforts, he being driven (as ſome think) from his Kingdom; yet in regard of that ſweet contentment which he found in God, he had more comfort than men uſe to have in time of *Harveſt and vintage**. One man hath houſe and lands to live

* Mat. 19.

* Pſ. 4. 7.

live upon, another hath nothing, only a ſmall trade, yet even that brings in a livelihood. A Chriſtian may have little in the world, but he drives the trade of contentment, and ſo he knows as well how to want as to *abound.* O the rare *Art* or rather *Miracle* of Contentment! Wicked men are often diſquieted in the enjoyment of all things, the contented Chriſtian is well in the want of all things.

Queſt. But how comes a Chriſtian to be contented in the deficiency of outward comforts? *Queſt.*

Anſw. A Chriſtian finds contentment deſtilled out of the breaſts of the Promiſes: He is poor in *Purſe*, but rich in *Promiſe.* There is one Promiſe brings much ſweet contentment into the ſoul; *They that ſeek the Lord ſhall not want any good thing**. If the thing we deſire be good for us, we ſhall have it; if it be not good, then the not having it *Anſw.* Pſal. 34. 10.

is

is good for us. The reſting ſatisfied with this Promiſe gives contentment.

3. *Excellency.* 3. Contentment makes a man in tune to ſerve God; it oyls the wheels of the ſoul, and makes it more agile and nimble; it compoſeth the Heart; and makes it fit for prayer, meditation, *&c.* How can he that is in a paſſion of grief of diſcontent *ſerve God without diſtraction* *? Contentment doth prepare and tune the Heart. Firſt you prepare the Viol, and wind up the ſtrings, ere you play a fit of Muſick. When a Chriſtians Heart is wound up to this Heavenly frame of contentment, then it is fit for duty. A diſcontented Chriſtian is like *Saul*, when the *evil ſpirit* came upon him. O what jarrings and diſcords doth he make in Prayer! When an Army is put into diſorder, now it is not fit for Battel: When the thoughts are ſcattered and diſtracted about the cares of this life, a man

* 1 Cor. 7. 35.

man is not fit for Devotion. Diſcontent takes the Heart wholly off from God, and fixeth it upon the preſent trouble, ſo that a mans mind is not upon his *Prayer*, but upon his *Croſs*.

Diſcontent doth disjoint the ſoul; and it is impoſſible now that a Chriſtian ſhould go ſo ſteadily and cheerfully in Gods ſervice. O how lame is his devotion! The diſcontented perſon gives God but *half* a duty; his Religion is nothing but *bodily exerciſe*, it wants a ſoul to animate it. *David* would not offer that to God which *coſt him nothing* *: where there is too much worldly *care*, there is too little ſpiritual *coſt* in a duty. The diſcontented perſon doth his duties *by halfs*; he is juſt like *Ephraim*, a *cake not turned** ; he is a cake baked on one ſide; he gives God the *outſide*, but not the ſpiritual part; his Heart is not in Duty; he is baked on one ſide, but the other ſide Dough; and

* 2 Sam. 24. 24.

* Hoſ. 7. 8.

and what profit is there of ſuch raw indigeſted ſervices? He that gives God only the skin of worſhip, what can he expect more than the ſhell of comfort? Contentation brings the Heart into frame; and then only do we give God the flower and ſpirits of a duty, when the ſoul is compoſed: now a Chriſtian doth *rem agere*, his Heart is intenſe and ſerious. There are ſome duties which we cannot perform as we ought without Contentment: As,

1. *To rejoyce in God.* How can he reyoice that is diſcontented? He is fitter for *Repining* than *Rejoycing*.

2. *To be thankful for mercy.* Can a diſcontented perſon be thankful? He can be *fretful*, not thankful.

3. *To juſtifie God in his proceedings* *. How can he do this who is diſcontented with his condition? He will ſooner cenſure Gods wiſdom, than

* Ezra 9. 23.

than clear his juſtice. O then how excellent is *Contentation*, which doth prepare, and as it were ſtring the Heart for Duty? indeed Contentment doth not only make our duties lively and agile, but *acceptable*. 'Tis this that puts beauty and worth into them, for Contentment *ſettles* the ſoul. Now, as it is with *Milk*, when it is always ſtirring you can make nothing of it, but let it ſettle awhile, and then it turns to cream: When the Heart is over-much ſtirred with diſquiet and diſcontent, you can make nothing of thoſe duties; how thin, how fletten and jejune are they? but when the Heart is once ſettled by Holy Contentment, now there is ſome worth in our duties, now they turn to cream.

4. Contentment is the ſpiritual *Arch* or Pillar of the ſoul: it fits a man to *bear burdens*: he whoſe Heart is ready to ſink under the leaſt ſin, by virtue of this hath a ſpirit invincible

4. *Excellency.*

cible under ſufferings. A contented Chriſtian is like the Camomile, the more it is trodden upon, the more it grows: As Phyſick works Diſeaſes out of the body, ſo doth Contentment work trouble out of the Heart: Thus it argues; If I am under reproach, God can vindicate me; If I am in want, God can relieve me. *Ye ſhall not ſee wind or rain; yet the valley ſhall be filled with water**. Thus holy Contentment keeps the Heart from fainting. In the *Autumn*, when the fruit and leaves are blown off, ſtill there is ſap in the root: When there is an *Autumn* upon our external felicity, and the leaves of our eſtate drop off; ſtill there is the ſap of Contentment in the Heart, and a Chriſtian hath life inwardly when his outward comforts do not bloſſom. The contented Heart is never out of Heart. Contentation is a Golden ſhield that doth beat back diſcouragements. *Humility* is like the

* 2 Kings 3. 17.

to the net, which keeps the ſoul down, when it is riſing through paſſion; and *Contentment* is the cork which keeps the heart up when it is ſinking through diſcouragement. Contentment is the great under-propper; it is like the *beam* which bears whatever weight is laid upon it; nay, it is like a *Rock* that breaks the waves.

'Tis ſtrange to obſerve the ſame affliction lying upon two men, how differently they carry themſelves under it. The contented Chriſtian is like *Sampſon*, that carried away the gates of the City upon his back*; he can go away with his croſs chearfully, and makes nothing of it; the other is like *Iſſachar* couching down under his burden*: the reaſon is, the one is content, and that breeds courage; the other diſcontentent, and that breeds fainting. Diſcontent ſwells the grief, and grief breaks the heart. When this ſacred ſinew of

*Judges 16. 3.

*Gen. 49. 14.

Contentment begins to ſhrink, we go limping under our afflictions. We know not what burdens God may exerciſe us with; let us therefore preſerve Contentment; as our *Contentment*, ſuch will be our *courage*. *David* with his five ſtones and his ſling, defied *Goliah*, and overcame him. Get but Contentment into the ſling of your heart, and with this ſacred ſtone you may both defie the world, and conquer it; you may break thoſe afflictions which elſe will break you.

5. Excellency.

5. A fifth excellency is, Contentment prevents many *ſins* and *temptations*.

1. It prevents many *ſins*. Where there wants Contentment, there wants no ſin; diſcontentedneſs without condition is a ſin that doth not go alone, but is like the firſt link of the chain, which draws all the other links along with it. In particular, there are two ſins which Con-

Contentation prevents.

1. *Impatience.* Diſcontent and Impatience are two twins; *This evil is of the Lord, why ſhould I wait any longer*?* As if God were ſo tied, that he muſt give us the mercy juſt when we deſire. Impatience is no ſmall ſin, as will appear if you conſider whence it ariſeth: As, *2 Kings 6. 33.

1. It is for want of Faith. Faith gives a right notion of God; it is an intelligent Grace; it believes that Gods wiſdom tempers, and his love ſweetens all ingredients; this works patience: *Shall I not drink the Cup which my Father hath given me?* Impatience is the daughter of Infidelity. If a Patient hath an ill opinion of the Phyſician, & conceits that he comes to poyſon him, he will take none of his Receipts. When we have a prejudice againſt God, and conceit that he comes to kill us, and undo us, then we ſtorm, and cry out through impatience. We are like a fooliſh

man ('tis *Chryſoſtoms ſimile*) that cries out, Away with the plaſter, though it be in order to a cure; is it not better that the plaſter ſmart a little, than the wound feſter and rankle?

2. Impatience is for want of love to God. We will bear his reproofs whom we love, not only patiently, but thankfully. *Love thinks no evil**. It puts the faireſt and moſt candid gloſs upon the actions of friend; *Love covers evil.* If it were poſſible for God in the leaſt manner to erre, (which vere blaſphemy to think) love would cover that error; love takes every thing in the beſt ſence; It makes us bear any ſtroke, *It endureth all things**; had we love to God, we ſhould have patience.

*1 Cor. 13. 5.

*1 Cor. 13. 7.

3. *Impatience* is for want of *Humility.* The impatient man was never humbled under the burden of ſin; he that ſtudies his ſins, the numberleſs number of them, how they

they are twiſted together, and ſadly accented, is patient, and ſaith, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him**. The greater noiſe drowns the leſſer; when the Sea roars, the Rivers are ſtill; he that lets his thoughts expatiate about ſin, is both ſilent and amazed, he wonders it is no worſe with him. How great then is this ſin of Impatience! and how excellent is *Contentation*, which is a *Superſedeas* or counterpoiſon againſt this ſin! The contented Chriſtian believing that God doth all in love, is patient, and hath not one word to ſay, unleſs to juſtifie God*. That is the firſt ſin which Contentation prevents. *Mic. 7. 9. *Pſ. 51. 4.

2. It prevents *murmuring*, a ſin which is a degree higher than the other; Murmuring is a quarrelling with God, & inveighing againſt him; *They ſpeak againſt God**; the murmurer ſaith interpretatively, that God *Numb. 21. 5.

hath not dealt well with him, and he hath deserved better from him. The murmurer *chargeth God with folly*: This is the language, or rather *blasphemy* of a murmuring spirit; God might have been a wiser and a better God. The murmurer is a mutineer. The *Israelites* are called in the same text *murmurers* and *rebels* *; and is not *rebellion as the sin of Witchcraft?* Thou that art a *murmurer*, art in the account of God as a *witch*, a *sorcerer*, as one that deals with the devil. This is a sin of the first magnitude: Murmuring oft ends in cursing: *Micha's* mother fell to cursing when the *talents of silver were taken away**. So doth the murmurer when a part of his estate is taken away: Our *murmuring* is the devils *musick*; this is that sin which God cannot bear; *How long shall I bear with this people that murmur against me**? It is a sin which whets the sword against a people; it is a land destroying sin; *Murmur ye*

*Numb. 17. 10.

* Judg. 17. 2.

*Numb. 14. 7.

not

not as ſome of them alſe murmured, and were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer *. 'Tis a ripening ſin; this, without Gods mercy, will haſten *Englands* funerals. O then how excellent is Contentation, which prevents this ſin! To be contented, and yet murmur, is a ſoloeciſm: A contented Chriſtian doth acquieſce in his preſent condition, and doth not murmur, but admire. Herein appears the excellency of Contentation, it is a ſpiritual antidote againſt ſin. * 1 Cor. 10. 10.

2. Contentment prevents many temptations: Diſcontent is a devil that is always tempting: 1. It puts a man upon *indirect means*: He that is poor and diſcontented will attempt any thing; he will go to the devil for riches: he that is proud and diſcontented will hang himſelf, as *Achitophel* did when his Counſel was rejected. Satan takes great advantage of our diſcontent; he loves to fiſh in theſe troubled waters. Diſ- 1. *Temptation.*

content doth both eclipſe reaſon and weaken faith; and it is Satan's policy, he doth uſually break over the hedge where it is weakeſt. Diſcontent makes a breach in the ſoul, and uſually at this breach the Devil enters by a tentation and ſtorms the ſoul. How eaſily can the Devil by his *Logick* diſpute a diſcontented Chriſtian into ſin? He forms ſuch a ſyllogiſm as this? He that is in want muſt ſtudy ſelf-preſervation: But you are now in want, therefore you ought to ſtudy ſelf-preſervation. Hereupon to make good his *Concluſion*, he tempts to the forbidden fruit, not diſtinguiſhing between what is *needful* and what is *lawful*. What? ſaith he, doſt thou want a livelihood? never be ſuch a fool as ſtarve: take *the riſing ſide* at a venture, be it good or bad, *eat the bread of deceit, drink the wine of violence*. Thus you ſee how the diſcontented man is a prey to that ſad tentation, * *to ſteal and take Gods Name in*

* Prov. 30. 9.

in vain. Contentation is a ſhield againſt tentation; for he that is contented, knows as well how to *want* as to *abound.*

He will not ſin to get a living; though the *bill of fare* grows ſhort, he is content. He lives as the birds of the air, upon Gods providence, and doubts not but he ſhall have enough to pay for his paſſage to heaven.

4. Diſcontent tempts a man to *Atheiſm* and *Apoſtaſie*; ſure there is no God to take care of things here below; would he ſuffer them to be in want who have *walked mournfully before him**? ſaith Diſcontent; Throw off Chriſts livery; deſiſt from thy Religion. Thus *Jobs* wife, being diſcontented with her condition, ſaith to her husband, *doſt thou ſtill retain thy integrity**; as if ſhe had ſaid, Doſt thou not ſee, *Job*, what is become of all thy Religion; *Thou feareſt God and eſcheweſt evil*, and what art thou the

2. *Tentation.*

*Mal. 3. 14.

*Job 2. 9.

the better? See how God turns his hand againſt thee; he hath ſmitten thee in thy body, eſtate, relations, and *doſt thou ſtill retain thy integrity?* what? ſtill devout? ſtill weep and pray before him? Thou fool, caſt off Religion, *turn Atheiſt.* Here was a ſore tentation that the devil did hand over to *Job* by his diſcontented wife; only his grace as a golden ſhield did ward off the blow from his heart, *Thou ſpeakeſt as one of the fooliſh women.* What profit is it, ſaith the diſcontented perſon, *to ſerve the Almighty?* Thoſe that never trouble themſelves about Religion are the proſperous men: and I in the mean while ſuffer want: as good give over driving the trade of Religion, if this be all my reward. This is a ſore tentation, and oft it prevails: Atheiſm is the fruit that grows out of the bloſſom of diſcontent.

Oh then behold the excellency of Contentment! It doth repel this ten-

tentation. If God be mine, ſaith the contented ſpirit, it is enough; though I have no lands or tenements, his ſmile makes Heaven; *His loves are better than wine; Better is the gleanings of* Ephraim, *than the Vintage of* Abiezer*: I have little *in hand*, but much *in hope*; my *livelihood* is ſhort, but this his promiſe, *even eternal life**: I am purſued by *malice*; but better is perſecuted godlineſs than proſperous wickedneſs. Thus divine contentment is a ſpiritual antidote both againſt *ſin* and *tentation*. *Judg. 8. 2. *1 John 2. 25.

6. Contentment ſweetens every condition. Chriſt turned the water into Wine; ſo Contentment turns the water of *Marah* into ſpiritual Wine; Have I but little? yet it is more than I can deſerve or challenge: This *modicum* is in mercy; 'tis the fruit of Chriſts blood; 'tis the legacy of free grace: A ſmall preſent ſent from a King is highly valued: This little I have is with a good conſcience *6. Excellency.*

ſcience. 'Tis not *ſtollen water*; guilt hath not muddied or poiſoned it; it runs pure. This *little* is a pledge of more; this bit of bread, is an earneſt of that bread which I ſhall eat *in the Kingdom of God*. This little water in the cruſe, is an earneſt of that heavenly *Nectar*, which ſhall be diſtill'd from the *true Vine*. Do I meet with ſome croſſes? my comfort is, if they be heavy I have not far to go; I ſhall but carry my croſs to *Golgotha*, and there I ſhall leave it: My croſs is light in regard of the weight of glory. Hath God taken away my comforts from me? 'Tis well, the Comforter ſtill abides. Thus *Contentment*, as an h ney-comb, drops ſweetneſs into every condition. Diſcontent is a leaven that ſowres every comfort, it puts Aloes and wormwood upon the breaſt of the creature, it leſſens every mercy, it trebbles every croſs; but the contented ſpirit ſucks ſweetneſs from every

every flower of providence, it can make a treacle of poiſon. *Contentation* is full of *Conſolation.*

7. Contentment hath this excellency, it is the beſt *Commentator* upon Providence; it makes a fair interpretation of all Gods dealings: Let the Providence of God be never ſo dark or bloody; Contentment doth conſtrue them ever in the beſt ſenſe. I may ſay of it as the Apoſtle of charity, *It thinks no evil**. Sickneſs (ſaith Contentment) is Gods furance to refine his gold, and make it ſparkle the more; the priſon is an Oratory, or houſe of prayer. What if God melts away the creature from me? he ſaw perhaps my heart grew too much in love with it; had I been long in that fat paſture, I ſhould have ſurfeited; and the better my eſtate had been, the worſe my ſoul would have been. God is wiſe; he hath done this, either to prevent ſome ſin, or

7. *Excellency.*

*1 Cor. 13.

or to exerciſe ſome grace. What a bleſſed frame of heart is this? A contented Chriſtian is an Advocate for God againſt unbelief and impatience; whereas diſcontent takes every thing from God in the worſt ſence; it doth implead and cenſure God; This evil I feel is but a ſymptom of greater evil; God is about to undo me; *The Lord hath brought us hither into the wilderneſs to ſlay us**. The contented ſoul takes all well; and when his condition is never ſo bad, he can ſay, *Yet God is good**.

*Numb. 20. 4.

*Pſ. 73. 1.

SECT. 2.

The ſecond Argument to contentation.

The ſecond Argument or Motive to contentment is, a Chriſtian hath that which may make him content*.

* *O fortunatos nimium bona ſi ſua norint.* Virg.

1. Hath

1. Hath not God given thee Christ? in him there are *unsearchable riches**: He is such a Golden *Mine* of Wisdom and Grace, that all the Saints and Angles can never dig to the bottom: as *Seneca* said to his friend *Polybius**, *Never complain of thy hard fortune as long as* Cæsar *is thy friend:* so I say to a Believer, Never complain as long as Christ is thy friend: He is an enriching Pearl, a sparkling Diamond; the infinite lustre of his merits makes us shine in Gods eyes*; in him there is both *fulness* and *sweetness*; he is *ineffabile bonum**: Scrue up your thoughts to the highest ἀκμὴ and pinacle, stretch them to the utmost period, let them expatiate to their full latitude and extent, yet they fall infinitely short of those ineffable & inexhaustible treasures which are locked up in Jesus Christ: And is not here enough to give the soul content? A Christian that wants *necessaries*,

*Eph. 3. 18

*Fas tibi non est de fortuna conqueri, salvo Cæsare. Sen.

*Eph. 1. 7.

*Aug.

ceſſaries, yet having Chriſt, he hath *the one thing needful**.

* *Qui habet habentem omnia, habet omnia.*

2. The ſoul is exerciſed and enamelled with the graces of the Spirit, and is not here enough to give Contentment? Grace is of a divine birth; it is the new plantation; it is the flower of the heavenly Paradiſe; 'tis the embroidery of the Spirit; 'tis *the ſeed of God**; 'tis * *the ſacred unction*; 'tis Chriſt's portraicture in the ſoul; 'tis the very foundation on which the ſuperſtructure of glory is laid. O, of what infinite value is Grace! what a Jewel is Faith! well may it be called *pretious*. Faith *! What is love, but a divine ſparkle in the ſoul? A ſoul beautified with grace, is like a room richly hung with Arras, or Tapeſtry, or the Firmament beſpangled with glittering Stars. Theſe are the *true riches**, which cannot ſtand with reprobation, and is not here enough to give the ſoul *Contentment?* What are

*1 John 3. 9.

*1 John 2. 27.

*2 Pet. 1. 1.

*Luke 16. 11.

are all other things but like the wings of a butterfly, curiouſly painted? but they defile our fingers. Earthly riches, ſaith *Auguſtine*, are full of poverty*; ſo indeed they are. For, 1. They cannot enrich the ſoul; Often-times under ſilken apparel, there is a thred-bare ſoul. 2. Theſe are corruptible: *Riches are not for ever*, as the wiſe man ſaith*. Heaven is a place where gold and ſilver will not go; a Believer is rich *towards God**, why then art thou diſcontented? hath not God given thee that which is better than the world? What if he doth not give thee the box, if he gives thee the Jewel? What if he denies thee farthings, if he pays thee in a better coyn? he gives thee gold, *viz.* ſpiritual mercies. What if the *water in the bottle* be ſpent? thou haſt enough in the fountain: what needs he complain of the worlds *Emptineſs*, that hath Gods *Fulneſs*? The Lord is *my portion*.

*Divitiæ corporales paupertatis plenæ ſunt. Aug.

*Prov. 27. 24.

*Luke 12. 21.

Pſal. 16. 5.

ſaith *David*, then let the lines fall where they will, in a *ſick bed*, or *priſon*; I will ſay, *The lines are fallen unto me in pleaſant places; yea I have a goodly heritage.* 3. Art thou not heir to all the promiſes? haſt thou not a reverſion of heaven? when thou letteſt go thy hold of natural life, art thou not ſure of eternal life? hath not God given thee the earneſt and firſt-fruits of glory? is not here enough to work the heart to Contentment?

What though ſome have a fraught
Of Cloves, and Nutmegs, and in Cinnamon ſail?
If thou haſt wherewithall to ſpice a draught,
When griefs prevail:

Herberts Poems.

And for the future time art heir
To th' Iſle of ſpices; is't not fair?

SECT.

SECT. 3.

The third Argument to Contentation.

The third Argument is, *Be content*, for elſe we confute our own prayers; We pray, *thy will be done*; It is the will of God that we ſhould be in ſuch a condition; he hath decreed it, and he ſees it beſt for us: Why then do we murmur, and are diſcontented at that which we pray for? either we are not in good earneſt in our prayer, which argues *hypocriſie*; or elſe we contradict ourſelves, which argues *folly*.

SECT. 4.

The fourth Argument to Contentation.

The fourth Argument to Con-

tentment is, becauſe now God hath his end, and Satan miſſeth of his end.

1. *God hath his end.* Gods end in all his croſs Providences, is to bring the heart to ſubmit and be content; and indeed this pleaſeth God much; he loves to ſee his children ſatisfied with what portion he doth carve and allot them. It contents him to ſee us contented: Therefore let us acquieſce in Gods Providence; Now God hath his end.

2. *Satan miſſeth of his end.* The end why the devil (though by Gods permiſſion) did ſmite *Job*, in his body and eſtate, was to perplex his mind; he did vex his *body* on purpoſe, that he might diſquiet his *ſpirit*. He hoped to bring *Job* into a fit of diſcontent; and then, that he would in a paſſion break forth againſt God; but *Job* being ſo well contented with his condition, as that he falls to *bleſſing of God*, he did now diſappoint Satan

Satan of his hope. *The Devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon**. Why doth the devil throw us into priſon? It is not ſo much the hurting our body, as the moleſting our mind that he aims at; he would impriſon our *Contentment*, and diſturb the regular motion of our ſouls; this is the deſign: 'tis not ſo much the putting us into a *priſon*, as the putting us into a *paſſion*, that he attempts; but by holy contentation, Satan loſeth his prey, he miſſeth of his end. The devil hath oft deceived us; the beſt way to deceive him, is by *contentation* in the midſt of *tentation*; our contentment will diſcontent Satan. Oh, let us not gratifie our Enemy! Diſcontent is the Devils *delight*; now it is as he would have it; he loves to warm himſelf at the fire of our paſſions. *Repentance* is the joy *of the Angels*, and *diſcontent* is the joy *of the Devils*? As the Devil danceth at diſcord, ſo he ſings

* Rev. 2. 10.

at diſcontent. The fire of our paſſions makes the Devil a bon-fire; 'tis a kind of heaven to him to ſee us torturing our ſelves with our own troubles; but by holy Contentment we fruſtrate him of his purpoſe, and do as it were put him out of countenance.

SECT. 5.

The fifth Argument to Contentation.

The next Argument is, by Contentment a Chriſtian gets a victory over himſelf: for a man to be able to rule his own ſpirit *, this of all others is the moſt noble conqueſt *. Paſſion denotes weakneſs; to be diſcontented, is ſutable to *fleſh* and *blood*; but to be in every ſtate content; reproached, yet *content*; impriſoned, yet *content*; this is above nature; this is ſome of that holy valour

* *Fortior eſt qui ſe, quàm qui fortiſſima vincit mœnia*, &c.
* Prov. 16. 32.

lour & chivalry, which only a divine ſpirit is able to infuſe. In the midſt of the affronts of the world to be patient, and in the changes of the world to have the ſpirit calmed; this argues μεγαλόψυχον θύμον, as *Homer* ſpeaks; this is a conqueſt worthy indeed of the Garland of honour. Holy *Job*, deveſted and turned out of all, leaving his *Scarlet*, and embracing the *Dunghill*, (a ſad cataſtrophe!) yet he had learned Contentment. 'Tis ſaid *He fell upon the ground and worſhipped* *. One would have thought he ſhould have fallen upon the ground and *blaſphemed*; no, he fell and *worſhipped*. He adored Gods juſtice and holineſs; behold the ſtrength of grace! here was an humble ſubmiſſion, yet a noble conqueſt; he got the victory over himſelf. 'Tis no great matter for a man to yield to his own paſſions; this is facile and feminine; but to content himſelf in denying of himſelf, this is ſacred.

* Job. 1. 20.

SECT. 6.

The ſixth Argument to Contentation.

The ſixth great Argument to work the heart to Contentment, is the conſideration that all Gods providences, how croſs or bloody ſoever, ſhall do a Believer good; *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God**. Not only *all good things*, but *all evil things* work for good; & ſhall we be diſcontented at that which works for our good? Suppoſe our troubles are twiſted together, and ſadly accented, as the Poet deſcribes it;

* Rom. 8. 28. πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν.

Littora quot conchas, quot amœna Roſaria flores,
Quótve ſoporiferum grana papaver habet:
Sylva feras quot alit, quot piſcibus unda natatur,

Et

Et tenerum pennis aera pulſat avis ;
Tot premor adverſis, &c. Ovid.

What if ſickneſs, poverty, reproach, Law-ſuits, *&c.* do unite and muſter their forces againſt us? All ſhall work εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν, for good; our *maladies* ſhall be our *medicines*: and ſhall we repine at that which ſhall undoubtedly do us good? *Unto the upright there ariſeth light in darkneſs**. Affliction may be baptized *Marah*; 'tis bitter, but *Phyſical*. Becauſe this is ſo full of comfort, and may be a moſt excellent *Catholicon* againſt diſcontent; I ſhall a little expatiate. * Pſalm 112. 4.

Quæſt. It will be enquired how the evils of affliction work for good? *Quæſt.*

R. Several ways.

1. They are *diſciplinary*; they teach us*. The Pſalmiſt having very elegantly deſcribed the Churches trouble, *Pſal.* 74. prefixeth this title to the *Pſalm*, משכיל which ſignifies *Anſw.* * *Scholæ crucis eſt ſchola lucis.*

nifies a *Pſalm giving inſtruction*; that which *ſeals up inſtruction*, works for good. God puts us ſometimes under the *black Rod*; but it is *virga diſciplinaris*, a rod of diſcipline; *Hear ye the rod, and who hath appoint-*
*Mic. 9. 9. *ed it**. God makes our *Adverſity* our *Univerſity*: Affliction is a *preach-*
*Jer. 6. 1. *er, Blow the Trumpet in* Tekoah, *Jer.* 6. 1. The Trumpet was to preach to the people, as appears, *ver.* 6. *Be thou inſtructed, O Jeruſalem.* Sometimes God ſpeaks to the Miniſter, to
*Iſa. 58. 1. lift up his voice like a *Trumpet**; and here he ſpeaks to the Trumpet, to lift up its voice like a *Miniſter*. Afflictions teach us

1. *Humility*: commonly proſperous and proud; *corrections* are Gods *corroſives*, to eat out the proud fleſh. Jeſus Chriſt *is a Lily of the*
*Cant. 2. 1. *valleys** ; he dwells in an humble heart; God brings us into the valley of tears, that he may bring us into the valley of humility; *Remembring*

*bring my affliction, the wormwood and the gall; my ſoul hath them ſtill in remembrance, and is humbled in me**. When men are grown high, God hath no better way with them, than to brew them a *cup of wormwood.* Afflictions are compared to *thorns**. Gods thorns are to prick the bladder of pride. Suppoſe a man run at another with a ſword to kill him, accidentally it only lets out his impoſtume: this doth him good. Gods ſword is to let out the impoſtume of pride: and ſhall that which makes us *humble*, make us diſcontented? *Lam. 3. 19, 20. *Hoſ. 2. 8.

2. Afflictions teach us Repentance; *Thou haſt chaſtiſed me, and I was chaſtiſed, I repented; and after I was inſtructed, I ſmote upon my thigh &c.** Repentance is the pretious fruit that grows upon the *Croſs.* When the fire is put under the Still; the water drops from the Roſes: fiery afflictions make the waters of repentance drop and diſtill from the eyes *Jer. 31. 18, 19.

eyes, and is here any cauſe of diſcontent?

3. Afflictions teach us to pray better*: *They poured out a Prayer when thy chaſtening was upon them**. Before they would ſay a prayer; now they *poured* out a prayer; *Vigilabat in ceto, qui ſtertebat in navi; Jonah* was aſleep in the ſhip, but awake and at prayer in the *whales belly*. When God puts under the firebrands of affliction, now our hearts boyl over the more; God loves to have his children *poſſeſſed* with a *ſpirit of prayer*. Never did *David, the ſweet ſinger of Iſrael*, tune his Harp more melodiouſly; never did he pray better, than when he was *upon the waters*. Thus afflictions do *indiſcipline*, and ſhall we be diſcontented at that which is for our good?

2. Afflictions are *probatory**. Gold is not the worſe for being tryed, or Corn for being fanned. Affliction is the touch-ſtone of ſincerity, it tryes

*Mala quæ hic nos premunt, ad Deum confugere faciunt.

*Iſa. 26. 16.

*Pſal. 66. 10, 11.

tryes what metal we are made of; affliction is Gods *fan* and his *ſieve*. 'Tis good that men be known; ſome ſerve God for a *livery*; they are like the Fiſherman that makes uſe of his net, only to catch the fiſh: So they go a fiſhing with the net of Religion only to catch preferment; Affliction diſcovers theſe. The *Donatiſts* went to the *Gothes*, when the *Arians* prevailed; Hypocrites will not fail in a ſtorm; true grace holds out in the *winter ſeaſon*. That is a *pretious faith*, which, like the ſtar, ſhines brighteſt in the darkeſt night. 'Tis good that our grates ſhould be brought to a trial; thus we have the comfort, and the Goſpel the honour; and why then diſcontented?

3. Afflictions they are *expurgatory*; theſe evils work for good, becauſe they work not ſin; and ſhall I be diſcontented at this? what if I have more *trouble*, if I have *leſs* ſin? the brighteſt day hath its clouds, the pureſt

pureſt gold its droſs, the moſt re
find ſoul hath ſome lees of corrup
tion. The Saints loſe nothing i
the furnace, but what they can wel
ſpare, *their droſs*: is not this for ou
good? why then ſhould we murmur
*Luke 12. 49. *I am come to ſend fire on the earth** *Tertullian* underſtands it of the fir
of *affliction.* God maks this lik
the fire of the three children, which
burned only their bonds, and ſe
them at liberty in the furnace: So
the fire of affliction ſerves to burn
the bonds of iniquity. *By this therefor
ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged
and this is all the fruit, to take awa
*Iſ. 27. 9. *his ſin**. When affliction or death
cómes to a wicked man, it takes a
way his *ſoul*; when it comes to
godly man, it only takes away his
ſin: is there then any cauſe why
we ſhould be diſcontented? God
ſteeps us in the briniſh water of af
fliction, that he may take out our
ſpots. Gods people are his husband-
1 Cor. 3. 6. ry;

ry; the ploughing of the ground kills the weeds, and the harrowing of the earth breaks the hard clods; Gods ploughing of us by affliction, is to kill the weeds of ſin, his harrowing of us is to break the hard clods of impenitency, that the heart may be the fitter to receive the ſeed of grace; and if this be all, why ſhould we be diſcontented?

4. Afflictions do both exerciſe and increaſe grace.

Firſt, they *Exerciſe* grace: affliction doth breathe our graces; every thing is moſt in its excellency, when it is moſt in its exerciſe. Our grace, though it cannot be dead, yet it may be *aſleep*, & hath need of awakening. What a dull thing is the fire when it is hid in the embers, or the Sun when it is masked with a cloud? a ſick man is *living*, but not *lively*; afflictions quicken and excite grace. God doth not love to ſee grace in the eclipſe. Now faith puts forth its

pureſt

pureſt and moſt noble acts in times of affliction: God makes *the fall of the leaf the ſpring* of our Graces. What if we are more *paſſive*, if grace be more active?

2. Afflictions do *increaſe* grace: as the wind ſerves to encreaſe and blow up the flame; ſo do the windy blaſts of affliction augment & blow up our graces: grace ſpends in the furnace, but it is like the *widows oyl in the cruſe*, which did encreaſe by pouring out. The torch when it is beaten, burns brighteſt, ſo doth grace when it is exerciſed by ſufferings. Sharp froſts nouriſh the good Corn, ſo do ſharp afflictions grace; ſome plants grow better in the ſhade than in the Sun: as the *Bay* and the *Cypreſs*. The ſhade of adverſity is better for ſome, than the Sun-ſhine of proſperity. *Naturaliſts* obſerve, that the *Colewort* thrives better when it is watered with ſalt water, than with freſh; ſo do ſome thrive better in the ſalt water

of

of affliction; and ſhall we be diſcontented at that which makes us grow and fructifie more?

5. Theſe afflictions do bring more of Gods immediate preſence into the ſoul. When we are moſt aſſaulted, we ſhall be moſt aſſiſted, *I will be with him in trouble* *. It cannot be ill with that man, with whom God is by his powerful preſence in ſupporting, and his gracious preſence in ſweetning the preſent tryal. God will be with us in trouble, not only to *behold* us, but to *uphold* us; as he was with *Daniel* in the *Lyons den*, and the three Children *in the Furnace*. What if we have more trouble than others, if we have more of God with us than others have? we never have ſweeter ſmiles from Gods face, than when the World begins to look ſtrange; *Thy Statutes have been my Songs*, where? not when I was upon the throne, but *in the houſe of my Pilgrimage* *. We read, *The Lord was not in the wind,*

* Pſ. 15.

* Pſ. 119.

* 1 Kings 12. 11. *nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire**; but in a metaphorical and ſpiritual ſenſe: when the wind of affliction blows upon a Believer, God is in the wind; when the fire of affliction kindles upon him, God is in the fire, *viz.* to ſanctifie, to ſupport, to ſweeten. If God be with us, the furnace ſhall be turned into a feſtival, the priſon into a Paradiſe, the earthquake into a joyful daunce. Oh what ſhould I be diſcontented, when I have more of Gods company?

6. Theſe evils of affliction are for good, as they bring with them Certificates of Gods love, and are evidences of his ſpecial favour. Affliction is the Saints livery, 'tis a badge and cognizance of Honour; That the God of glory ſhould look upon a Worm, and take ſo much notice of him, as to afflict him rather than loſe him, is an high act of Favour. Gods rod is *Sceptrum Regale*; a *Scepter of dignity*. *Job* call

Gods

Gods afflicting of us, *his magnifying* of us*. Some mens prosperity hath been their shame, when others affliction hath been their crown. * Job 7. 17.

7. These afflictions work for our good, because they work for us *a far more exceeding weight of glory**. That which works for my glory in Heaven, works for my good; we do not read in Scripture that any mans Honour and riches do work for him a *weight of glory*, but afflictions do; and shall a man be discontented at that which works for his glory? The heavier the weight of affliction, the heavier the weight of glory; not that our sufferings do merit glory (as the Papists do wickedly gloss) but though they are not *causa*, they are *via*; they are not the cause of our crown, yet they are the way to it, and God makes us as he did our Captain, *perfect through sufferings**; and shall not all this make us contented with our condition? Oh I beseech you * 2 Cor. 4. 18. *Heb. 2. 10

look not upon the *evil* of affliction, but the *good*. Afflictions in Scripture, are called *viſitations**, the word in the Hebrew פקד to *viſit*, is taken in a *good* ſenſe as well as a *bad*: Gods afflictions are but *friendly viſits*; behold here Gods rod is like *Aarons rod* bloſſoming, and *Jonathans rod*; it hath Honey at the end of it. Poverty ſhall ſtarve our ſins*; the ſickneſs of the body ſhall cure a ſinſick ſoul: O then inſtead murmuring and being diſcontented, *bleſs the Lord*; hadſt thou not met with ſuch a rub in the way, thou mighteſt have gone to Hell and never ſtop'd.

*Job 7.18.

* *Felix pauper as, beata miſeria.*

SECT. VII.

The ſeventh Argument to contentation.

THe next Argument to Contentment is, conſider the evil of diſcontent.

content. Male-content hath a mixture of grief and anger in it, and both theſe muſt needs raiſe a ſtorm in the ſoul. Have you not ſeen the poſture of a ſick man? ſometimes he will ſit upon his bed, by and by he will lye down, and when he is down, he is not quiet; firſt he turns to one ſide, and then to the other, he is reſtleſs: this is juſt the emblem of a diſcontented ſpirit, the man is not ſick, yet he is never well, ſometimes he likes ſuch a condition of life, and when he hath it, yet he is not pleaſed, he is ſoon weary; and then another condition of life; this is *an evil under the Sun.*

Now the evil of Diſcontent appears in three things. Evil of diſcontent.

1. The *ſordidneſs* of it, it is unworthy of a Chriſtian.

Firſt, it is unworthy of his profeſſion. It was the ſaying of an Heathen; Bear thy condition quietly, *noſce te eſſe hominem*, know thou art

* *Fer man-suete fortu-nam tuam, nosce te esse hominem.* Tull.

*a man**: So I say, Bear thy condition contentedly, *nosce te esse Christianum*, know thou art a *Christian*. Thou professest to live by Faith; what, and not content? Faith is a Grace that doth *substantiate* things

Heb. 11.1. *not seen**, Faith looks beyond the creature, it feeds upon promises, Faith lives not by *Bread alone*. When the water is spent in the *bottle*, Faith knows whither to have recourse: now to see a Christian dejected in the want of visible supplies, and recruits, where is Faith? Oh, saith one, my estate in the world is down, I, and which is worse, thy Faith is down. Wilt thou not be contented, unless God let down the vessel to thee, as he did to *Peter*, wherein were all manner of *Beasts of the earth*,

Act. 10.12 *and Fowls of the air**? must you have first and second course? this is like *Thomas*, *unless I put my finger into the print of the nails, I will not be-*

† Joh. 20. 25. *lieve*†. So, unless thou hast a sen-

sible

ſible ſeeling of outward comforts, thou wilt not be content. True Faith will *truſt* God where it cannot *trace* him, and will adventure upon Gods *bond*, though it hath nothing in view. You who are diſcontented becauſe you have not all you would, let me tell you, either your Faith is a *non entity*, or at beſt but an *embryo*; 'tis a *weak Faith* that muſt have Stilts and Crutches to ſupport it: Nay, diſcontent is not only below Faith, but below reaſon; why are you diſcontented? is it becauſe you are diſpoſſeſſed of ſuch comforts? well, and have you not reaſon to guide you? doth not reaſon tell you, that you are but *tenants at will*? and may not God turn you out when he pleaſe? You hold not your eſtate *jure*, but *gratis*; not by a juridical right, but upon favour and courteſie.

2. It is unworthy of the *relation* we ſtand in to God; a Chriſtian is inveſted with the title and privilege

of *ſonſhip* *; he is an heir of the Promiſe: Oh conſider, the lot of free Grace is fallen upon thee, thou art nearly allied to Chriſt, and of the blood royal; thou art advanced, in ſome-ſenſe, above the Angels, *why then art thou, being the Kings Son, lean from day to day* *? 2 Sam. 13. 4. Why art thou diſcontented? O how unworthy is this? as if the heir to ſome great Monarch ſhould go pining up and down, becauſe he may not pick ſuch a flower.

*Eph. 1. 5.

* 2 Sam. 13. 4.

The ſecond evil of diſcontent.

2. Conſider the *ſinfulneſs* of it; which appears in three things,

The cauſes
The concomitants } of it.
The conſequences

1. 1. It is ſinful in the *cauſes*; which are theſe.

1. *Pride.* He that thinks highly of his deſert, uſually eſteems meanly of his condition; a diſcontented man

Man is a proud man, he thinks himſelf *better* than others; therefore finds fault with the Wiſdom of God that he is not *above* others *. Thus the thing *formed* ſaith to him that *formed* it, *Why haſt thou made me thus*? Why am I not higher? Diſcontents are nothing elſe but the æſtuations and boilings over of pride.

* *Nec quenquam jam ferre poteſt* Cæſarve *priorem* Pompeiuſve *parem* —— Lucan. l. 1. Pharſal.

* Rom. 9. 20.

2. The ſecond cauſe of diſcontent is envy, which *Auguſtine* calls *vitium diabolicum*, the ſin of the Devil. Satan envied *Adam* the glory of Paradiſe, and the robe of innocency: he that envies what his neighbour hath, is never contented with that portion which Gods providence doth parcel out to him *; as envy ſtirs up *ſtrife*, (this made the Plebeian faction ſo ſtrong amongſt the *Romans*) ſo it creates *diſcontent*; the envious man looks ſo much upon the bleſſings which another enjoys, that he

* *Fertilior ſeges eſt alienis ſemper in agris Vicinumq; pecus grandius uber habet.* Ovid.

he cannot ſee his own mercies, and ſo doth continually vex and torture himſelf. *Cain* envyed that his brothers ſacrifice was accepted, and his rejected, hereupon he was diſcontented, and preſently murderous thoughts began to ariſe in his Heart.

3. The third cauſe is *Covetouſneſs*. This is a radical ſin. Whence are vexing Law-ſuits, but from diſcontent? and whence is diſcontent, but from covetouſneſs? *Covetouſneſs* and *contentedneſs* cannot dwell in the ſame Heart. *Avarice* is an *helua*, that is never ſatisfied. The covetous man is like *Behemoth*; *Behold, he drinketh up a river, he truſteth that he can draw up* Jordan *into his mouth**. There are four things (ſaith *Solomon*) ſay, *It is not enough*, I may add a fifth, *The Heart of a covetous man, he* is ſtill craving. Covetouſneſs is like a Wolf in the breaſt, which is ever feeding; and becauſe a man is not ſatisfied, he is never content.

* Job 40. 23.

4. The

4. The fourth cauſe of Diſcontent is *Jealouſie*, which is ſometimes occaſioned through melancholy, and ſometimes miſapprehenſion. The ſpirit of jealouſie cauſeth *this evil ſpirit*. Jealouſie *is the rage of a man* *, and oft, this is nothing but *ſuſpicion* and *fancy*, yet ſuch as creates real diſcontent. * Prov. 6. 34.

5. The fifth cauſe of diſcontent is *diſtruſt*, which is a great degree of Atheiſm. The diſcontented perſon is ever diſtruſtful. *The Hill of proviſion* grows low; I am in theſe ſtraits and exigences, can God help me? *Can he prepare a Table in the wilderneſs?* ſure he cannot. My eſtate is exhauſted, can God recruit me? My Friends are gone, can God raiſe me up more? ſure the arm of his power is ſhrunk. I am like the *dry fleece*, can any water come upon this fleece? *If the Lord would make windows in Heaven, might this thing be* *? Thus the *Anchor of Hope*, and the

* 2 Kings 7. 2.

the ſhield of faith being caſt away, th
ſoul goes pining up and down.

Diſcontent is nothing elſe but th
Echo of unbelief; and remember a
ſtruſt is worſe than *diſtreſs*.

2. Diſcontent is evil in the conc
mi:ants of it which are two.

1. Diſcontent is joined with
ſullen melancholy; A Chriſtian of
right temper, ſhould be ever chea
ful in God; *Serve the Lord wi*
*Pſ.100.5. *gladneſs* *. A ſign the oyl of gra
hath been poured into the Heart
when *the oyl of gladneſs* ſhines in th
countenance. Chearfulneſs credi
Religion; how can the diſconten
ed perſon be chearful? Diſconte
is a dogged ſullen humour; becau
we have not what we deſire, Go
ſhall not have a good word or loo
from us; as the Bird in the cage, b
cauſe ſhe is pent up, and cannot fl
into the open air, therefore beats he
ſelf againſt the cage, and is ready t
kill her ſelf. Thus that peeviſh Pro
phet

phet; *I do well to be angry to the death* *. * Jonah 4.

2. Diſcontent is accompanied with *unthankfulneſs*; becauſe we have not all we deſire, we never mind the mercies which we have; we deal with God, as the Woman of *Sarepta* did with the Prophet; the Prophet *Elijah* had been a means to keep her alive in the famine; for it was for his ſake, that her *meal in the barrel*, and her *oyl in the cruſe* failed not; but aſſoon as ever her Son dies, ſhe falls into a paſſion, and begins to quarrel with the Prophet; *What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come to call my ſin to remembrance, and to ſlay my Son* *? So ungratefully we deal with God: we can be content to receive mercies from God, but if he doth croſs us in the leaſt thing, then through diſcontent, we grow techy and impatient, and are ready to flie upon God: thus God loſeth all his mercies *, * 1 King. 17. 18.

cies *. We read in Scriptu of the *thank-offering* *. Th discontented person cu God short of this; the Lor loseth his *thank-offering*. discontented Christian repin in the midst of mercies, as *Adam*, wh sin'd in the midst of *paradise*. Discon tent is a spider that sucks the poiso of unthankfulness out of the swee est flower of Gods blessings; and by devilish chymistry extract dross o of the most refined Gold. The di contented person thinks every thin he doth for God too much, and eve ry thing God doth for him too littl Oh what a sin is unthankfulness *! is an accumulative sin. Wha *Cicero* saith of *Parricide* *, I may fa of *Ingratitude*; there are many sin bound up in this one sin: it is a vo luminous wickedness; and how ful of this sin is *Discontent*? A discon tented Christian, because he hat not all the world, therefore disho

nour

* Φαῦλος ἀνὴρ πίθος ἐστὶ τετρημμένος, εἰς ὃν ἅπασας Ἀντλῶν τὰς χάριτας εἰς κενὸν ἐξέχεας. *Luc. Epig.*

* 2 Chro. 20. 30.

* *Ingratus vitandus est ut dirum scelus, nec cogitari pestilentius potest; nam tellus ipsa fœdius nihil creat.* Pet. Crinitus l. 2. Poem.

* *Qui occidit patrem plurima committit peccata in uno.*

nours God with the mercies which he hath. God made *Eve* out of *Adams* rib, to be an *helper* (as the Father ſpeaks;) but the Devil made an arrow of this rib, and ſhot *Adam* to the Heart: So doth diſcontent take the rod of Gods mercy, and ungratefully ſhoot at him: Eſtate, Liberty, ſhall be employed againſt God. Thus it is oftentimes. Behold then how Diſcontent and Ingratitude are interwoven and twiſted one within another: thus diſcontent is ſinful in its concomitants. Chryſoſt.

3. It is ſinful in its *Conſequences*; which are theſe; 3. Diſcontent is ſinful in its conſequences.

1. It makes a man very unlike the ſpirit of God. The ſpirit of God is a *meek ſpirit*. The Holy Ghoſt deſcended in the likeneſs of a *Dove* *. A Dove is the emblem of meekneſs. A diſcontented ſpirit is not a meek ſpirit. 1. * Mat. 3. 6.

2. It makes a man like the Devil. The Devil being ſwelled with the 2.

poyſon

poyſon of envy and malice; is never content: Juſt ſo is the Male-content. The Devil is an unquiet ſpirit, he is
1 Pet. 5. 8. ſtill *walking about* *; 'tis his reſt to be walking: And herein is the diſcontented perſon like him; for he goes up and down vexing himſelf. *Seeking reſt, and finding none*, he is the Devils picture.

3. 3. Diſcontent disjoints the ſoul, it untunes the Heart for Duty; *Is any*
* Jam. 5. 13. *man afflicted let him pray* *. But, is any man *Diſcontented*; how ſhall he pray? *lift up pure hands without*
* 1 Tim. 5. 8. *wrath* *. Diſcontent is full of wrath and paſſion; the Male-content cannot lift up pure hands; he lifts up *leprous hands*; he poiſons his prayers; will God accept of a poiſoned ſacrifice? *Chryſoſtom* compares prayer to a fine Garland. Thoſe ſaith he, that make a Garland, their hands had need be clean; prayer is a pretious Garland, the Heart that makes it had need be clean: Diſcontent throws

poiſon

poiſon in the ſpring, (which was death among the *Romans.*) Diſcontent puts the Heart into a diſorder and mutiny, and ſuch a one cannot ſerve the Lord *without diſtraction.*

4. Diſcontent ſometimes unfits for the very uſe of reaſon; *Jonah* in a paſſion of diſcontent, ſpake no better than blaſphemy, and non-ſenſe; *I do well*, ſaid he, *to be angry to the death**. What? to be angry with God; and to die for anger? ſure he did not know well what he ſaid. When diſcontent tranſports, then like *Moſes*, we ſpeak *unadviſedly with our lips.* This humour doth even ſuſpend the very acts of reaſon. Jon. 4.8.

5. Diſcontent doth not only diſquiet a mans ſelf, but thoſe who are near him. This evil ſpirit troubles *Families, Pariſhes, &c.* If there be but one ſtring out of tune, it ſpoils all the muſick. One diſcontented ſpirit makes jarrings and diſcords a-

mong others: 'Tis this ill humour that breeds quarrels and Law-ſuits. Whence is all our *Contention* but for want of *Contentation*? From whence *come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even* * Jam. 4. 1 *of your luſts**? in particular from this *luſt* of Diſcontent? Why did *Abſolom* raiſe a War againſt his Father, and would have taken off not only his *Crown*, but his *Head*? was it not his diſcontent? *Abſolom* would be King. Why did *Ahab* ſtone *Naboth*? was it not diſcontent about the Vineyard? Oh this devil of diſcontent! Thus you have ſeen the ſinfulneſs of it.

3. *The ſimplicity of it.* * Pſ. 39. 6.

3. Conſider the ſimplicity of it. I may ſay as the Pſalmiſt, *Surely they are diſquieted in vain**: which appears thus.

1. Is it not a vain ſimple thing to be troubled at the loſs of that which is in its own nature periſhing and changeable? God hath put a viciſſitude

ſitude into the creature; all the world rings changes: and for me to meet with inconſtancy here, to loſe a friend, eſtate, to be in a conſtant fluctuation, is no more than to ſee a flower wither, or a leaf drop off in Autumn. There is an *Autumn* upon every comfort, *a fall of the leaf*; Now it is extream folly to be diſcontented at the loſs of thoſe things which are ſo in their own nature loſeable. What *Solomon* ſaith of *Riches*, is true of all things under the Sun, *They take wings*. *Noah*'s Dove brought an Olive-branch in its mouth; but preſently flew out of the Ark, and never returned more: Such a comfort brings to us Honey in its mouth; but it hath wings; and to what purpoſe ſhould we be troubled, unleſs we had wings to flie after and overtake it?

2. Diſcontent is an Heart-breaking; *by ſorrow of the Heart the Spirit is broken* *; It takes away the com-

* Prov. 25. 13.

comfort of life. There is none of us but may have mercies if we can ſee them; now becauſe we have not all we deſire, therefore we will loſe the comfort of that which we have already. *Jonah* having his Gourd ſmitten (a withering vanity,) was ſo diſcontented, that he never thought of his miraculous deliverance out of the Whales belly; he takes no comfort of his life, but wiſheth that he might die. What folly is this? we muſt have all or nõne; herein we are like Children, that throw away the piece which is cut them, becauſe they may have no bigger. Diſcontent eats out the comfort of life. Beſides, it were well if it were ſeriouſly weighed how prejudicial this is even to our health: For diſcontent, as it doth diſcruciate the mind, ſo it doth pine the body; it frets as a moth, and by waſting the ſpirits, weakens the vitals; The pleuriſie of Diſcontent brings the body into

into a conſumption; and is not this folly?

3. Diſcontent does not eaſe us of our burden, but makes the Croſs heavier. A contented ſpirit goes chearfully under its affliction. Diſcontent makes our grief as unſupportable, as it is unreaſonable. If the leg be well, it can endure a fetter and not complain; but if the leg be ſore, then the fetter troubles. Diſcontent of mind is the *ſore* that makes the Fetters of affliction more grievous. Diſcontent troubles us more than the trouble it ſelf, it ſteeps the affliction in Wormwood. When Chriſt was upon the Croſs, the Jews brought him *Gall* and *Vinegar* to drink, that it might add to his ſorrow. Diſcontent brings to a man in affliction gall and vinegar to drink, this is worſe than the affliction it ſelf. Is it not folly for a man to imbitter his own croſs?

4. Diſcontent ſpins out our

comfort of life. There is none of us but may have mercies if we can ſee them; now becauſe we have not all we deſire, therefore we will loſe the comfort of that which we have already. *Jonah* having his Gourd ſmitten (a withering vanity,) was ſo diſcontented, that he never thought of his miraculous deliverance out of the Whales belly; he takes no comfort of his life, but wiſheth that he might die. What folly is this? we muſt have all or nõne; herein we are like Children, that throw away the piece which is cut them, becauſe they may have no bigger. Diſcontent eats out the comfort of life. Beſides, it were well if it were ſeriouſly weighed how prejudicial this is even to our health: For diſcontent, as it doth diſcruciate the mind, ſo it doth pine the body; it frets as a moth, and by waſting the ſpirits, weakens the vitals; The pleuriſie of Diſcontent brings the body into

into a conſumption; and is not this folly?

3. Diſcontent does not eaſe us of our burden, but makes the Croſs heavier. A contented ſpirit goes chearfully under its affliction. Diſcontent makes our grief as unſupportable, as it is unreaſonable. If the leg be well, it can endure a fetter and not complain; but if the leg be ſore, then the fetter troubles. Diſcontent of mind is the *ſore* that makes the Fetters of affliction more grievous. Diſcontent troubles us more than the trouble it ſelf, it ſteeps the affliction in Wormwood. When Chriſt was upon the Croſs, the Jews brought him *Gall* and *Vinegar* to drink, that it might add to his ſorrow. Diſcontent brings to a man in affliction gall and vinegar to drink, this is worſe than the affliction it ſelf. Is it not folly for a man to imbitter his own croſs?

4. Diſcontent ſpins out our

troubles the longer. A Chriſtian is diſcontented becauſe he is in want; and therefore he is in want, becauſe he is diſcontented; he murmurs becauſe he is afflicted; and therefore he is afflicted, becauſe he murmurs. Diſcontent doth delay and adjourn our mercies. God deals herein with us, as we uſe to do with our children; when they are quiet and cheerful, they ſhall have any thing: but if we ſee them cry and fret, then we with-hold from them: We get nothing from God by our diſcontent, but blows. The more the child ſtruggles, the more it is beaten: When we ſtruggle with God by our ſinful paſſions, he doubles and trebles his ſtrokes; God will tame our curſt Hearts. What got *Iſrael* by their peeviſhneſs? they were within eleven days journey of *Canaan*, and now they were diſcontented, and began to murmur; God leads them a march of forty years long in the wilder-

wilderneſs. Is it not folly for us to adjourn our own mercies? Thus you have ſeen the evil of diſcontent. I have been long upon this Argument; but *nunquam nimis dicitur, quod nunquam ſatis dicitur.*

SECT. VIII.

The eighth Argument to Contentation.

THe next Argument or motive to Contentment is this: why is not a man content with the competency which he hath? perhaps if he had more, he would be leſs content; covetouſneſs is a dry drunkenneſs. The world is ſuch, that the more we *have*, the more we *crave* *; it cannot fill the Heart of man. When the fire burns, how do you quench it? not by putting oyl to the flame, or laying on more wood, but by withdraw-

* *Creſcit amor nummi quantum ipſa pecunia creſcit.*

ing the fuel. When the appetite is enflam'd after riches, how may a man be ſatisfied? not by having juſt what he deſires, but by withdrawing the *fuel*, *&c.* moderating and leſſening his deſires. He that is contented hath enough. A man in a fever or dropſie, thirſts; how do you ſatisfie him? not by giving him liquid things which will enflame his thirſt the more, but by removing the cauſe, and ſo curing his diſtemper. The way for a man to be contented, is not by raiſing his eſtate higher, but by bringing his Heart lower.

SECT. IX.

The ninth Argument to contentation.

THe next Argument to Contentment is, *The ſhortneſs of life.* It is but

but a *vapour*, ſaith *James* *. ὁ βίος τροχός*, life is a wheel ever running. The Poets painted Time with wings, to ſhew the volubility and ſwiftneſs of it. *Job* compares it to a ſwift *poſt* *, (our life rides poſt) and a *day*, not a *year*. It is indeed like a *day*, Infancy is as it were the *day-break*, *Youth* is the Sun-riſing, *full growth* is the Sun in the Meridian, *old age* is Sun-ſetting. *Sickneſs* is the *evening*, then comes the *night* of death. How quick is this day of life ſpent? oftentimes this Sun goes down at noon-day; life ends before the evening of old age comes; Nay, ſometimes the Sun of life ſets preſently after Sun-riſing. Quickly after the dawning of Infancy, the night of death approaches. Oh, how ſhort is the life of man! The conſideration of the brevity of life may work the Heart to contentment. Remember thou art to be here but a day; *parem viæ, quiâ multùm viatici?* thou haſt but

* Jam. 4. 14.
* Πνεῦμα καὶ σκιά. Sophocles.
* Phocylides.
* Job. 9. 25

but a ſhort way to go, and what needs a long proviſion for a ſhort way * ? If a Traveller have but enough to bring him to his journies end, he deſires no more. We have but a day to live, and perhaps we may be in the twelfth hour of the day; why, if God give us but enough to bear our charges till night, it is ſufficient. Let us be content. If a man let the Leaſe of an houſe or Farm, but for two or three days, and he ſhould fall a building and planting, would he not be judged very indiſcreet? So when we have but a ſhort time here, and death calls us preſently off the ſtage; to thirſt immoderately after the world, and pull down our ſouls to build up an eſtate, is it not extream folly? Therefore as *Eſau* ſaid once in a *profane ſenſe*, concerning his birth-right; *Lo, I am at the point to die, and what profit ſhall this birth-right do to me?* So let a Chriſtian ſay in a *Religious ſenſe*; Lo, I am even

* *Quid opus eſt ad brevem vitam longis cœptis?* Hyper.

even at the point of death, my grave is going to be made, and what good will the world do me? If I have but enough till *Sun-ſetting*, I am content.

SECT. X.

The tenth Argument to Contentation.

THe tenth Argument or Motive to Contentment is, Conſider ſeriouſly the nature of a proſperous condition. There are in a proſperous eſtate three things.

1. *Plus moleſtiæ*, more trouble. Many who have abundance of all things to enjoy, yet have not ſo much content and ſweetneſs in their lives, as ſome that go to their hard labour. Sad, ſolicitous thoughts do often attend a proſperous condition; *Care* is the *malus genius*, or evil

1. *Plus moleſtiæ.*

vil ſpirit which haũnts the rich man, and will not ſuffer him to be quiet. When his Cheſt is full of Gold, his Heart is full of care, either how to *manage*, or how to *encreaſe*, or how to *ſecure* what he hath gotten. O the troubles and perplexities that do wait upon proſperity! The world's high-ſeats are very uneaſie; Sun-ſhine is pleaſant, but ſometimes it ſcorcheth with its heat; the Bee gives Honey, but ſometimes it ſtings: Proſperity hath its ſweetneſs, and alſo its ſting. *Competency with Contentment is far more eligible.* Never did *Jacob* ſleep better than when he had the Heavens for his Canopy, and an hard ſtone for his pillow. A large voluminous eſtate is but like a long trailing Garment, which is more troubleſome than uſeful.

2. *Plus periculi.* 2. In a proſperous condition there is *plus periculi*, more danger; and that two ways.

Firſt, *Ex parte ipſius*, in reſpect of

of a mans ſelf. The rich mans *Table is oft his ſnare*; he is ready to ingulph himſelf too deep in theſe ſweet waters *. In this ſenſe it is hard to know how to *abound*. It muſt be a ſtrong brain that bears ſteady Wine; he had need have much Wiſdom and Grace that knows how to bear an high condition; either he is ready to kill himſelf with care, or ſurfeit himſelf upon luſcious delights. Oh the hazard of *Honour*, the damage of dignity! Pride, Security, Rebellion, are the three worms that breed of plenty *. The paſtures of proſperity are rank and ſurfeiting. How ſoon are we broken upon the ſoft pillow of eaſe *? Proſperity is often a *trumpet* that ſounds a *retreat*, it calls men off from the purſuit of Religion. The Sun of proſperity oft dulls, and puts out the fire of zeal. How many ſouls hath the *pleuriſie of abundance* kill'd *? They that *will be rich*, fall into

* *Magnæ fœlicitatis eſt à fœlicitate non vinci.* Aug. de verb. Dom. c. 13.

* Deut. 32. 15.

* Πλείας γὰρ ἡ περιουσία ἐκτραχηλίζει ἢ ἡ ἐνδεία. Theophylact.

* *Plurimi ſunt qui*

into ſnares *. The world is bird-lime at our feet, it is full of *Golden ſands*, but they are *quick-ſands*. Proſperity like ſmooth *Jacob*, will ſupplant and betray; a great eſtate without much vigilancy will be a thief to rob us of Heaven; ſuch as are upon the pinacle of honour, are in moſt danger of falling.

paupertate poſiti non habent patientiam; & qui abundantiam, non habent temperantiam, Remigius.

* 1 Tim. 6. 10.

Sæpius ventis agitatur ingens
Pinus, & celſæ graviora caſu
Dedicunt turres, feriúntque ſummos
Fulmina montes, &c.
Hor. car. l. 2. Od. 10.

A lower eſtate is leſs hazardous. The little Pinnace rides ſafe by the ſhore, when the gallant ſhip advancing with its maſt and top-ſail, is caſt away. *Homo victus in Paradiſo, victor in ſtercore.* *Adam* in Paradiſe was overcome, when *Job* on the dung-hill was a conquerour. *Samſon* fell aſleep on *Delilah*'s lap: Some have

have fallen ſo faſt aſleep on the lap of eaſe and plenty; that they have never awaked till they have been in Hell *. The worlds *fawning* is worſe than its *frowning*; and it is more to be feared when it ſmiles, than when it thunders *. Proſperity in Scripture is compared to a candle: *Job* 29. 3. *When his candle ſhined upon my Head.* How many have burnt their wings about this candle! *Segetem ubertas nimia ſternit, rami onere franguntur, ad maturitatem non pervenit nimia fœcunditas* *: The corn being over-ripe ſheds, and fruit when it mellows, begins to rot; When men do mellow with the Sun of proſperity, commonly their ſouls begin to rot in ſin. *How hard is it for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven* *? His golden weights keep him from aſcending up *the hill of God*; and ſhall we not be content, though we are placed in a lower Orb? What if we are not in

* *Turpi frigescunt ſecula luxu molles, &c.* Juven. 6. Sat.

* *Periculoſior eſt mundus blandiens quam fulminans.* Aug.

* Sen. ad Lucilium. Ep. 80.

* Luk. 18. 24.

in ſo much bravery, and gallantry as others? we are not in ſo much danger; as we want the honour of the world, ſo the temptations. Oh the abundance of danger that is in abundance! We ſee by common experience that *Lunaticks*, when the Moon is declining, and in the wane, are ſober enough, but when it is in the full, they are more wild and exorbitant: When mens eſtates are in the wane, they are more ſerious about their ſouls, more humble; but when it is the *full of the Moon*, and they have abundance, then their Hearts begin to ſwell with their eſtates, and are ſcarce themſelves. Thoſe that write concerning the ſeveral *Climates*, obſerve that ſuch as live in the Northern parts of the World, if you bring them into the South part, they loſe their ſtomachs, and die quickly; but thoſe that live in the more Southern hot Climates, bring them into the North

North, and their ſtomachs mend, and they are long lived: Give me leave to apply it; bring a man from the cold ſtarving climate of poverty, into the hot ſouthern climate of proſperity, and he begins to loſe his appetite to good things, he grows weak, and a thouſand to one if all his Religion doth not dye; but bring a Chriſtian from the South to the North, from a rich flouriſhing eſtate into a jejune low condition, let him come into a more cold and hungry air, and then his ſtomach mends, he hath better appetite after heavenly things, he hungers more after Chriſt, he thirſts more for grace, he eats more at one meal of the bread of life, than at ſix before; this man is now like to live and hold out in his Religion; be content then with a *modicum*; if you have but enough to pay for your paſſage to Heaven, it ſufficeth.

2. A proſperous condition is

dangerous *ex parte vicini*, in regard of others: a great estate for the most part draws * envy to it *, whereas in *parvis quies*. *David a Shepherd* was quiet; but *David a Courtier* was pursued by his enemies: envy cannot endure a superiour: an envious man knows not how to live, but upon the ruines of his neighbour; he raiseth himself higher, by bringing others lower. Prosperity is an eye-sore to many. Such sheep as have most wool are soonest fleeced. The barren tree grows peaceably; no man meddles with the Ash or Willow; but the Apple-tree and the Damasin shall have many rude Sutors. Oh then be content to carry a lesser sail; he that hath less *revenues*, hath less *envy*; such as bear the fairest frontispiece, and make the greatest shew in the world, are the *white* for envy and malice to shoot at.

* Gen. 26. 12,13,14.

* *Felicitas semper subjecta est invidiæ.* Laert. Diogenes *de vit. Philos.*

3. *Plus recensionis.*

3. A prosperous condition hath in

it

it *plus recenſionis*, a greater reckoning; every man muſt be reſponſible for his talents. Thou that haſt great poſſeſſions in the world, doſt thou trade thy eſtate for Gods glory? Art thou *rich in good works?* Art thou a κοινὸν ἀγαθὸν; Grace makes a *private perſon* a *common good.* Doſt thou diſburſe thy money for publick uſes? it is lawful (in this ſenſe) to put out our money to uſe. Oh let us all remember, an eſtate is a *depoſitum*: we are but Stewards, and our Lord and Maſter will ere long ſay, *Give an account of your ſtewardſhip*: the greater our eſtate, the greater *our charge*: the more our revenues, the more our reckonings. You that have a leſſer Mill going in the world, be content; God will expect leſs from you, where he hath ſowed more ſparingly.

SECT. XI.

The eleventh Argument to Contentation.

THe eleventh Argument is the example of thoſe who have been eminent for Contentation. *Examples* are uſually more forcible than *Precepts*. *Abraham* being call'd out to hot ſervice, and ſuch as was againſt fleſh and blood, was content. God bids him offer up his Son *Iſaac* *; this was a great work: *Iſaac* was *filius ſenectutis*, the Son of his old age; *filius dilectionis*, the ſon of his love; *filius promiſſi*, the ſon of the promiſe: Chriſt the Meſſiah was to come of his line, *In Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be bleſſed*; ſo that to offer up *Iſaac*, ſeemed not only to oppoſe *Abrahams* reaſon, but his *faith* too; for if *Iſaac* die, the world (for ought he knew

* Gen. 22. 2.

knew) must be without a Mediator: Besides, if *Isaac* be sacrificed, was there no other hand to do it but *Abrahams?* must the Father needs be the executioner? must he that was the Instrument of giving *Isaac* his being, be the Instrument of taking it away? yet *Abraham* doth not dispute or hesitate, but believes against *hope*, and is content with Gods prescription. So, when God called him to *leave his countrey**, he was content. Some would have argued thus: what? leave all my friends, my native soil, my brave situation, and go turn pilgrim? *Abraham* is content: besides *Abraham* went blindfold, *he knew not whither he went**. God held him in suspence, he must go wander he knows not where; and when he doth come to the place God had laid out for him, he knows not what oppositions he shall meet with there; the world doth seldom cast a favourable aspect upon strangers*,

* Heb. 11. 1.

* Vers. 8.

* Gen. 32. 16.

yet he is content, and obeys; *He so-*
* Heb. 11. *journed in the land of promise**, behold
&c. a little his pilgrimage. First, he goes to *Charan*, a City in *Mesopotamia*; when he had sojourn'd there a while, his Father dyes; then he removes to *Sichem*, then to *Bethlem* in *Canaan*; there a famine ariseth; *then* he went down to *Egypt*; after that he returns into *Canaan*, when he came there ('tis true he had a promise) but he found nothing to answer expectation; he had not there one foot of Land, but was an exile: in this time of his sojourning he buried his wife; and as for his dwellings, he had no sumptuous buildings, but led his life in poor cottages; all this was enough to have broken any mans heart. *Abraham* might think thus with himself, is this the land I must possess? here is no probability of any good; *all things are against me*: well, is he discontented? no; God saith to him, *Abraham* go, leave thy Countrey; and this word

was

was enough to lead him all the world over; he is presently upon his march; here was a man had learned to be content. But let us descend a little lower, to Heathen * *Zeno* (of whom *Seneca* speaks) who had once been very rich, hearing of a shipwrack, and that all his goods were drowned at Sea; Fortune saith he (he spake in an heathen dialect) hath dealt well with me; and would have me now to study Philosophy *; he was content to change his course of life, to leave off being a Merchant, and turn Philosopher. And if an Heathen said thus, shall not a Christian much more say, when the world is drained from him, *Jubet Deus mundum derelinquere & Christum expeditiùs sequi*, God would have me leave off following the world, and study Christ more, and how to get to Heaven? Do I see an Heathen contented, and a Christian disquieted*? How did Heathens vilifie those things which Christians

* Socrates *Philosophorum luculentissimus pauper semper nudis pedibus incedens, sordido pallioło contentus honores omniaque terrena contemnens,* Plut.

* *Jubet me fortuna expeditius Philosopharyi.* Seneca.

* *Pudeat, pudeat illos nomine tenus Christianos quibus quod ad hanc rem attinet, Ethnici rectius sapuerant.* Hyp.

magnifie? though they knew not God, or what true happineſs meant, yet would ſpeak very ſublimely of a *Numen* or Deity, and of the life to come, as *Ariſtotle* and *Plato*; and for thoſe *Elyzian* delights which they did but fanſie, they undervalued and contemned the things here below; it was the doctrine they taught their Scholars, and which ſome of them practiſed, that *men ſhould ſtrive to be contented with a little*; they were willing to make an exchange; to have leſs good, and more learning: and ſhall not we be content then to have leſs of the world, ſo we may have more of Chriſt? May not Chriſtians bluſh to ſee Heathens content with a *viaticum*, ſo much as would recruit nature, and to ſee themſelves ſo tranſported with the love of earthly things, that if they begin a little to abate, and the *bill of proviſion* grows ſhort, they murmur, and are like *Micah*, *Have ye taken away*

my

my gods, and do ye ask me what I ail *? Have Heathens gone ſo far in contentation? and is it not ſad for us to come ſhort of them that came ſhort of Heaven? Theſe *Heroes* of their time, how did they embrace death it ſelf? *Socrates* dyed in priſon, *Hercules* was burnt alive, *Cato* (whom *Seneca* calls, * the lively image and portraicture of vertue) thruſt through with a ſword; but how bravely, and with what contentment of ſpirit did they dye? ſhall I, ſaith *Seneca*, weep for *Cato*, or *Regulus*, or the reſt of thoſe Worthies that dyed with ſo much valour and patience? Did not croſs providences make them to alter their countenance, and do I ſee a Chriſtian appalled and amazed? Did not death affright them? and doth it diſtract us? Did the ſpring-head of Nature riſe ſo high? and ſhall not Grace, like the *waters of the Sanctuary*, riſe higher? We that pretend to live by faith may

* Judg. 18. 24.

* *Virtutum viva imago.* Sen.

may we not go to School to them who had no other Pilot but reaſon to guide them? nay, let me come a ſtep lower, to creatures void of reaſon; we ſee every creature is contented with its allowance; the beaſts with their provender, the birds with their neſts, they live only upon providence; and ſhall we make our ſelves below them? let a Chriſtian go to School to the Ox and the Aſs to learn contentedneſs; we think we never have enough, and are ſtill laying up, the fowls of the air do not lay up, *they reap not, nor gather into barns* *; it is an argument which Chriſt brings, to make Chriſtians contented with their condition; The birds do not lay up, yet they are provided for, and are contented; *Are ye not* (ſaith Chriſt) *much better than they?* but if you are diſcontented, are ye not much worſe than they? let theſe examples quicken us.

* Mat. 6. 26.

SECT.

SECT. XII.

The twelfth Argument to Contentation.

THe twelfth argument to Contentment is; Whatever change or trouble a child of God meets with, it is all the Hell he ſhall have. Whatever eclipſe may be upon his name, or eſtate, I may ſay of it, as *Athanaſius* of his baniſhment, it is *nubecula citò tranſitura*, a little cloud which will ſoon be blown over; and then his gulf is ſhot, his Hell is paſt.

Albus ut obſcuro detergit nubila cœlo
Sæpe Notus, neque parturit imbres
Perpetuos; ſic tu ſapiens finire memen-
Triſtitiam, Hor. *Ode* 7. 1. (*to*

Death begins a wicked mans hell, but it puts an end to a godly mans hell.

Think

Think with thy ſelf, what if I endure this? it is but a *temporary hell*; indeed if all our hell be here, it is but an eaſie hell. What is the cup of affliction to the cup of Damnation? *Lazarus* could not get a crum; he was ſo diſeaſed, that the dogs took pity on him, and (as if they had been his Phyſicians) *licked his ſores*; but this was an eaſie hell, the *Angels* quickly fetch'd him out of it. If all our hell be in this life, in the midſt of this hell we may have the love of God, and then it is no more *Hell*, but *Paradiſe*. If our hell be here, we may ſee to the *bottom* of it, it is but skin-deep, it cannot touch the ſoul, and we may ſee to the *end* of it: 'tis an hell that is ſhort-lived*: After a wet night of affliction comes a bright morning of the Reſurrection; if our lives be ſhort, our tryals cannot be long. As our *riches* take *wings* and flye, ſo do our *ſufferings*; then let us be contented.

* *Nocte pluit tota redierunt ſpectacula mane.*

SECT.

SECT. XIII.

The thirteenth Argument to Contentation.

THe laſt Argument to Contentment is this: To have a *competency*, and to want *Contentment*, is a great judgement. For a man to have a huge ſtomach *, that whatever meat you give him, he is ſtill craving, and never ſatisfied; you do ſay, this is a great judgement upon the man: Thou who art *heluo pecuniæ*, a devourer of money, and yet never haſt enough, but ſtill cryeſt, *Give, give*, this is a ſad judgement; *They ſhall eat and not have enough* *. *The throat* of a malicious man is an open *Sepulchre* *, ſo is the heart of a covetous man. Covetouſneſs is not only *malum culpæ*, but *malum pœnæ*; it is not only a *ſin*, but the

* *Caninum appetitum.*

* Hoſ. 4. 10.

* Rom. 3. 23.

the *puniſhment* of a ſin. 'Tis a ſecret curſe upon a covetous perſon, he ſhall thirſt and thirſt, and never be ſatisfied, *He that loveth ſilver, ſhall not be* * Eccl. 5. 10. *ſatisfied with ſilver* *; and is not this a curſe? what was it but a ſevere judgement upon the people of *Judah*? *Ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink,* * Hag. 1. 6. *but ye are not filled with drink* *. Oh let us take heed of this *plague*. Did *Eſau* ſay to his brother, I have *abun-* * Gen. 33. 6. *dance* *, my brother, or as we tranſlate it, *I have enough?* and ſhall not a Chriſtian ſay ſo much more? 'Tis ſad that our heart ſhould be ſo dead to heavenly things, and as a ſpunge to ſuck in earthly. Let all that hath been ſaid, work our minds to holy Contentation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Three things inſerted by way of Caution.

IN the next place I come to lay down ſome neceſſary Cautions: Though (I ſay) a man ſhould be contented in every eſtate; yet there are three eſtates in which he muſt not be contented. *Caution 1.*

1. He muſt not be contented in a *natural eſtate*; here he muſt learn not to be content. A ſinner in his pure naturals is under the *wrath of God**, and ſhall he be content, when that dreadful Vial is going to be poured out? is it nothing to be under the ſcorchings of divine fury? *who can dwell with everlaſting burnings?* A ſinner, as a ſinner, is *under the power of Satan**, and ſhall he in this *eſtate* be contented? who would be contented

* John 3. 36.

* Acts 26. 18.

to

to ſtay in the Enemies quarters? while we ſleep in the lap of ſin, the Devil doth to us as the *Philiſtines* did to *Sampſon*, cut the lock of our ſtrength and put out our eyes *; be not content, O ſinner, in this eſtate. For a man to be in debt body and ſoul, in fear every hour to be arreſted and carried priſoner to hell, ſhall he now be content? Here I preach againſt contentation. Oh get out of this condition; I would haſten you out of it, as the Angel haſtened *Lot* out of *Sodom* *; there is the ſmell of the fire and brimſtone upon you. The longer a man ſtayes in his ſin, the more ſin doth ſtrengthen *; 'tis hard to get out of ſin when the heart as a garriſon is victualled and fortified. A young plant is eaſily removed; but when the tree is once rooted, there is no ſtirring of it: thou

* 2 Cor. 4. 4.

* Gen. 19. 15.

* Heb. 3. 13.

Vincere conſuetudinem eſt dura pugna. Aug.

* Γὰ μὴ καθαρὰ ἢ σωμάτων ὁκόσον ἂν θρέψῃς, μᾶλλον βλάψεις. Hippocr. l. 2. Aphor. 9.

who

who art rooted in thy pride, unbelief, impenitency, it will coſt thee many a ſad pull ere thou art pluckt out of thy *natural eſtate* *. 'Tis an hard thing to have a brazen face and a broken heart. *He travelleth with iniquity* *, *Pſal.* 7. 14. Be aſſured the longer you travel with your ſins, the more and the ſharper pangs you muſt expect in the *new birth*. Oh be not contented with your natural eſtate. *David* ſaith, *why art thou diſquieted O my ſoul* * ? but a ſinner ſhould ſay to himſelf, Why art thou not diſquieted, O my ſoul? why is it that thou layeſt afflictions ſo to heart, and canſt not lay ſin to heart? 'Tis a mercy when we are diſquieted about ſin; a man had better be at the trouble of ſetting a bone, than to be lame, and in pain all his life; bleſſed is that trouble that brings the ſoul to Chriſt. 'Tis one of the worſt ſights to ſee a bad conſcience quiet; of the two, better is a fever, than a

* Jer. 6. 15.

* Pſal. 7. 14.

* Pſal. 43. 5.

lethargy. I wonder to see a man in his natural estate content; what? contented to go to hell?

Caution 2. 2. Though in regard of externals a man should be in every state content, yet he must not be content in such a condition wherein God is apparently dishonoured. If a mans trade be such that he can hardly use it, but he must trespass upon a Command (and so *makes a trade of sin*) he must not content himself in such a condition; God never called any man to such a calling as is sinful; a man in this case had better knock off and divert; better lose some of his gain, so he may lessen some of his guilt. So for servants that live in a *profane Family* (the suburbs of Hell) where the Name of God is not called upon, unless when it is taken in vain; they are not to content themselves in such a place, they are to come *out of the Tents of these sinners*; there is double danger in living among the prophane. 1. Les

1. Leſt we come to be infected with the poiſon of their ill example. *Joſeph* living in *Pharaohs* Court, had learned to *ſwear by the life of Pharaoh**. We are prone to ſuck in example*, men take in deeper impreſſions by the *eye*, than by the *ear*. *Dives* was a bad pattern, and he had many brethren that ſeeing him ſin, trode juſt in his ſteps; therefore, ſaith he, I pray thee ſend him *to my Fathers houſe; for I have five brethren, that he may teſtifie to them, that they come not into this place of torment.* *Dives* knew which way they went; it is eaſie to catch a diſeaſe from another, but not to catch health. The bad will ſooner *corrupt* the good, than the good will *convert* the bad; take an equal quantity and proportion, ſo much ſweet wine, with ſo much ſowre vinegar; the vinegar will ſooner ſowre the wine, than the wine will ſweeten the vinegar. Sin is compared to the

* Gen. 42. 15.

* *Vivitur exemplis magis quam legibus.*

Luke 16. 27, 28.

plague *, and to *leaven** , to ſhew of what a ſpreading nature it is. A bad maſter makes a bad ſervant. *Jacob*'s cattel by looking on the rods which were ſpeckled and ring-ſtrak'd, conceived like the rods: We do as we ſee others before us, eſpecially *above* us. If the head be ſick, the other parts of the body are diſtempered. If the Sun ſhine not upon the mountains, it muſt needs ſet in the valleys. We pray, *Lead us not into temptation*; and do we lead our ſelves into temptation? *Lot* was the worlds miracle, who kept himſelf freſh in *Sodoms* ſalt water.

* 1 Kings 8. 38.
* 1 Cor. 5. 7.

2. By living in an evil Family, we are lyable to incur their puniſhment; *Pour out thy wrath upon the Families that call not upon thy Name**. For want of pouring out prayer, the wrath of God was ready to be poured out. 'Tis dangerous living in the *Tents of Kedar*. When God ſends his *flying roll*, written within and

* Jer. 13. 25.

and without with curſes, it *enters into the houſe of the thief and perjurer, and it conſumes the timber and the ſtones thereof**. Is it not of ſad conſequence to live in a profane perjur'd Family, when the ſin of the Governour pulls his houſe about his ears? If the ſtone and timber be deſtroyed, how ſhall the ſervant eſcape? And ſuppoſe God ſend not a *temporal roll* of curſes in the Family, there is a *ſpiritual roll*, and that is worſe*. Be not content to live where Religion dyes. *Salute the brethren, and* Nymphas *and the Church which is in his houſe**: the houſe of the godly is a *little Church*; the houſe of the wicked *a little hell**. Oh incorporate your ſelves into a religious Family; the houſe of a good man is perfum'd with a bleſſing*. When the holy oyl of grace is poured on the head, the *ſavour* of this ointment ſweetly diffuſeth it ſelf, and the *vertue* of it runs down upon the skirts

* Zac. 5.4.

* Pro. 3.33

* Col. 4.15

* Pro. 7.25

* Pro 3.33

of the family. Pious examples are very magnetical and forcible. *Seneca* ſaid to his Siſter, though I leave you not wealth, yet I will leave you a good example. Let us ingraff our ſelves among the Saints; by being often among the ſpices, we come to ſmell of them.

3. *Caution.* 3. The third Caution is, though in every condition we muſt be content, yet we are not to content our ſelves with a *little grace*. Grace is the *beſt bleſſing*. Though we ſhould be contented with a competency of eſtate, yet not with a competency of grace. It was the end of Chriſts Aſcenſion to heaven, *to give gifts*; and the end of thoſe gifts, *that we may grow up into him who is the head Chriſt* *. Where the Apoſtle diſtinguiſheth between our *being* in Chriſt, and our *growing* in him: our ingraffing and our flouriſhing: be not content with a *modicum* in Religion.

* Ephes. 4. 15.

'Tis not enough that there be *life*, but

but there must be *fruit*. Barrenness in the Law was accounted a curse. The further we are from fruit, the nearer we are to cursing*. 'Tis a sad thing when men are fruitful only *in the unfruitful works of darkness*. Be not content with a dram or two of grace; next to a *Still-born*, a *starveling* in Christ is worst. Oh covet more grace, never think thou hast enough; it is *bona & honesta avaritia*; we are bid to *covet the best things**; it is an heavenly ambition, when we desire to be high in Gods favour; a blessed contention, when all the strife is, who shall be the most holy. Saint *Paul*, though he was content with a little of the world, yet not with a little grace; he *reached forward*, and *pressed towards the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus**. A true Christian is a *wonder*, he is the most contented, and yet the least satisfied: he is contented with a morsel of

* Heb. 6. 8.

* 1 Cor. 12.

* Phil. 3. 14.

bread, and a little water in the Cruſe, yet never ſatisfied with grace; he doth *anhelare*, pant and breathe after more; this is his prayer, Lord, more conformity to Chriſt, more communion with Chriſt; he would fain have Chriſts Image more lively pictured upon his ſoul. True grace is alwayes progreſſive: as the Saints are called *Lamps* and *Stars* in regard of their *light*; ſo *trees of righteouſneſs* * for their growth; they are indeed like the tree of life, bringing forth ſeveral ſorts of fruit.

* Iſa. 61. 3.

A true Chriſtian grows, 1. *Formâ, in beauty.* Grace is the beſt complexion of the ſoul; it is at the firſt plantation like *Rachel*, fair to look upon; but ſtill the more it lives, the more it ſends forth its rayes of beauty. *Abrahams* faith was at firſt beautiful; but at laſt it did ſhine in its orient colours, and grew ſo illuſtrious, that God himſelf was in love with

with it, and makes his faith a pattern to all believers.

2. A true Christian grows *Suavitate*, in sweetness. A poisonful weed may grow as much as the Hyssop, or Rosemary; the Poppy in the field, as the Corn; the Crab, as the Pearmain; but the one hath a harsh sowre taste, the other mellows as it grows: An hypocrite may grow in outward dimensions, as much as a child of God, he may pray as much, profess as much; but he grows only in magnitude, he brings forth sowre grapes, his duties are leavened with pride, the other ripens as he grows; he grows in love, humility, faith, which do mellow and sweeten his duties, and make them come off with a better relish. The believer grows as the flower, he casts a fragrancy and perfume.

3. A true Christian grows *Roborate*, in *strength*; he grows still more *rooted* and *setled*. The more the tree

grows,

grows, the more it ſpreads its root in
* ἐῤῥιζωμένοι. Col. 2. 7. the earth*; A Chriſtian who is a plant of the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, the longer he grows, the more he incorporates into Chriſt, and ſucks ſpiritual juice and ſap from him; he is a dwarf in regard of humility, but a gyant in regard of ſtrength. He is ſtrong to do duties, to bear burdens, to reſiſt temptations.

4. He grows *Vigore*, in the *exerciſe of his grace*; He hath not only oyl in his Lamps, but his Lamps are burning and ſhining. Grace is agile and dexterous. Chriſts Vines do
* Cant. 6. 11. flouriſh*, hence we read of a *lively*
* 1 Pet. 1. 3. *hope* *, and a *fervent love* *; here
* 1 Pet. 1. 22. the activity of grace. Indeed ſometimes grace is as a ſleepy habit in the ſoul, like ſap in the Vine, not exerting its vigour; which may be occaſioned through ſpiritual ſloth, or by reaſon of falling into ſome ſin; but this is only *pro tempore*, for a while; the *ſpring* of grace will come, the *flowers will appear*

ear; and the *Fig-tree put forth her green figs.* The fresh gales of the Spirit do sweetly revive and refocilate grace. The Church of Christ, whose heart was a *Garden*, and her graces as pretious *Spices*, prayes for the heavenly breathings of the Spirit, that her sacred spices might flow out*. * Cant. 4. 16.

5. A true Christian grows *Incremento*, both in the kind and in the degree of grace. To his spiritual *living* he gets an augmentation: he adds to *faith*, *virtue*; to *virtue*, *knowledge*; to *knowledge*, *temperance*, &c.* here is grace growing in the *kind*; and he goes on *from faith to faith** ; there is grace growing in the *degree. We are bound to give thanks to God for you brethren, because your faith groweth exceedingly*; * ὑπεραύξανει, it encreaseth over and above. And the Apostle speaks of those spiritual plants which were laden with Gospel fruit*, *Phil.* 1. 11. A Christian is com- * 2 Pet. 1. 5, 6. * Rom. 1. 17. * 2 Thess. 1. 3. * Phil. 1. 11.

compar'd to the *Vine* (an emblem of fruitfulneſs) he muſt bear full cluſters; we are bid to *perfect* that which is *lacking in our faith**. A Chriſtian muſt never be ſo old as to be paſt bearing; he brings forth *fruit in his old age**. An heaven-born plant is ever growing; he never thinks he grows enough; he is not content unleſs he add every day one cubit to his ſpiritual ſtature. We muſt not be content juſt with ſo much grace as will keep life and ſoul together; a dram or two muſt not ſuffice, but we muſt be ſtill encreaſing *with the encreaſe of God**. We had need *renew* our ſtrength as the *Eagle**; our ſins are renewed, our wants are renewed, our tentations are renewed, and ſhall not our *ſtrength* be renewed? Oh be not content with the firſt *embryo* of grace, grace in its infancy, and minority. You look for degrees of glory; be you Chriſtians of Degrees.

* 1 Theſ. 3. 10.

* Pſal. 92. 14.

* Col. 2. 9.

* Iſa. 40. 31.

Though

Though a Believer ſhould be contented with a *modicum* in his eſtate, yet not with a *modicum* in Religion. A Chriſtian of the right breed labours ſtill to excel himſelf, and come near unto that holineſs in God, who is the original, the pattern and prototype of all holineſs.

CHAP. XIII.

Uſe 4.
Shewing how a Chriſtian may know whether he hath learned this divine Art.

Uſe 4. THus having laid down theſe three Cautions, I proceed in the next place to an Uſe of Trial. 4. How may a Chriſtian know that he hath learned this leſſon of Contentment? I ſhall lay down ſome κριτήρια or characters by which you ſhall know it. *Uſe* 4. *Trial.*

1. A

1. *Charact.* 1. A contented ſpirit is a *ſilent ſpirit.* He hath not one word to ſay againſt God; I was *dumb* or *ſilent,* * Pſal. 39. becauſe *thou Lord, didſt it* *, Pſal. 39. Contentment ſilenceth all diſpute; * Lam. 3. 28. *He ſitteth alone and keepeth ſilence* *; There is a ſinful ſilence, when God is diſhonoured, his truth wounded and men hold their peace; this ſilence is a loud ſin; and there is an *holy* ſilence, when the ſoul ſits down quiet and content with its condition: When *Samuel* tells *Eli* that heavy meſſage from God, that he would *judge his houſe, and that the iniquity of his Family ſhould not be purged away with ſacrifice for ever* *; doth *Eli* murmur or diſpute? No, he hath not one word to ſay againſt God; *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good* *. A diſcontented ſpirit ſaith as *Pharaoh, Who is the Lord?* why ſhould I ſuffer all this? why ſhould I be brought into this low condition? *Who is the Lord?* But a gracious heart

* 1 Sam. 3. 13.

* Verſ. 18.

faith

ſaith as *Eli*, *it is the Lord*, let him do what he will with me. When *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the ſons of *Aaron*, had offered up *ſtrange fire*, and *fire went from the Lord and devoured them* *, is *Aaron* now in a paſſion of diſcontent? No, *Aaron held his peace* *. A contented ſpirit is never angry, unleſs with himſelf for having hard thoughts of God. When *Jonah* ſaid *I do well to be angry*; this was not a contented ſpirit, it did not become a Prophet.

* Lev. 10. 1.

* Verſe 3.

2. A contented ſpirit *is a cheerful ſpirit*, the Greeks call it Εὐθυμία. Contentment is ſomething more than *Patience*; for Patience denotes only ſubmiſſion *, Contentment denotes *cheerfulneſs*. A contented Chriſtian is more than paſſive; he doth not only *bear the Croſs*, but *take up the Croſs* *. He looks upon God as a wiſe God; and whatever he doth, though it be not *ad voluntatem*, yet *ad ſanitatem* *, it is

2. *Character.*

* Ὑπομένειν ſignificat adverſitates ſuſtinere. Cypr. item perſeverare. Caſaub.

* Mat. 6. 24.

* *Aug.*

is in order to a cure: Hence the contented Christian is cheerful, and with the Apostle, *takes pleasure in infirmities, distresses, &c.* * He doth not only submit to Gods dealings, but rejoice in them; he doth not only say, *Just is the Lord* in all that is befallen me; but *Good is the Lord.* This is to be contented. A sullen Melancholy is hateful; it is said, God loves a *cheerful Giver* *; I, and God loves a *cheerful Liver.* We are bid in Scripture not to be *careful*, but we are nowhere bid not to be *cheerful.* He that is contented with his condition, doth not abate of his spiritual joy; and indeed he hath that within him, which is the ground of cheerfulness; he carries a pardon sealed in his heart *.

* 2 Cor. 12. 10.

* 2 Cor. 9. 7.

* Matth.

3. A contented spirit, is a *thankful spirit* *. This is a degree above the other; *In every thing giving thanks* *. A gracious heart spies mercy in every condition, therefore hath

* Jam. 1. 21

* 1 Thes. 5.

hath his heart ſcrued up to thankfulneſs; others will bleſs God for proſperity, he bleſſeth him for affliction. Thus he reaſons with himſelf, Am I in want? God ſees it better for me to want, than to abound; God is now dieting of me, he ſees it better for my ſpiritual health, ſometimes to be kept faſting; therefore he doth not only ſubmit, but is thankful. The malecontent is ever complaining of his condition; the contented ſpirit is ever giving thanks. Oh what height of grace is this! A contented heart is a *Temple*, where the praiſes of God are ſung forth, not a *Sepulchre*, wherein they are buried. A contented Chriſtian in the greateſt ſtraits hath his heart enlarged, and dilated in thankfulneſs. He oft contemplates Gods love in election; he ſees that he is a *monument* of mercy, therefore deſires to be a *pattern* of praiſe. There is alwayes gratulatory muſick in a contented ſoul; the ſpirit of grace works in

the heart like new wine, which under the heavieſt preſſures of ſorrow, will have a vent open for thankfulneſs; this is to be content.

4. He that is content, no condition comes amiſs to him; ſo it is in the *Text, in quocunque ſtatu, in whatever ſtate I am* *. A contented Chriſtian can, *prout res exigit*, turn himſelf to any thing, either want, or abound. The people of *Iſrael* knew neither how to abound, nor yet how to want *; when they were in want, they murmured, *Can God prepare a Table in the wilderneſs?* and when they ate and were filled, then they lifted up the heel. *Paul* knew how to manage every eſtate: he could be either a note higher, or lower, he was (in this ſenſe) an *Univerſaliſt*, he could

* Καὶ ὀλίγοις κεχρῆσθαι οἶδα, καὶ λίμον φέρειν καὶ περισσείαν, καὶ περισσεύειν. Chryſoſt.

* Οἱ Ἰσραηλῖται ὅτε πεινᾶν ἔδησαν, καὶ ἐλάλησαν κατὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ εἶπον. Μὴ δυνήσεται ὁ Θεὸς ἑτοιμάσαι τράπεζαν; ἀλλ' ὅτε χορτάζεσθαι, ἔφαγον καὶ ἐνεπλήσθησαν, καὶ ἀπελάκτισαν. Theophylact.

could do any thing that God would have him*: If he were in proſperity, he knew how to be thankful; if in adverſity, he knew how to be patient; he was neither lift up with the one, nor caſt down with the other. He could carry a greater ſail, or leſſer *; Thus a contented Chriſtian knows how to turn himſelf to any condition. *Sicut bonus eſt dux & peritus, qui in quolibet exercitu operatur ſecundùm exigentiam ejus; & cortarius qui ex quolibet corio facit optimos ſotulares; Ita Chriſtianus ſapiens, qui ſcit quolibet ſtatu bene ſe gerere.* We have thoſe who can be contented in *ſome eſtate*; but not in every eſtate: They can be content in a wealthy eſtate, when

* *Similis eſt vita rotæ, in cujus modo infima, modo ſuprema parte verſamur.* Aquinas.

* *Magna & rara virtus eſt inter epulas eſurire, inter veſtes algere, inter honores humiliari. Scivit* Hannibal *penuriam pati, neſcivit abundare; nam delicie Capuanæ* Hannibalem *invictum enervaverunt, & Romanis jam imbellem vincendum objecerunt.* Ber.

they have the ſtreams of milk and honey; while Gods candle ſhines upon their head, now they are content; but if the wind turn and be againſt them, now they are diſcontented. While they have a ſilver crutch to lean upon, they are contented; but if God breaks this crutch, now they are diſcontented; but *Paul* had learned in every ſtate to carry himſelf with equanimity of mind *: others could be content with their affliction, ſo God would give them leave to pick and chuſe. They could be content to bear *ſuch* a croſs; they could better endure ſickneſs than poverty, or bear loſs of eſtate, than loſs of children; if they might have ſuch a mans croſs, they could be content; any condition but the preſent: this is not to be content. A contented Chriſtian doth not go to chuſe his Croſs, but leaves

* Ἴσθι ἦν τῇ ἐνδείᾳ ἐν τῇ πλησμονῇ, ἔστε ἐκεῖθεν πιέζομθα, ἔστε ἐντεῦθεν χαυνόμεθα. Chryſoſt.

leaves God to chuſe for him; he is content both for the *kind*, and for the *duration*. A contented ſpirit ſaith, Let God apply what medicine he pleaſeth, and let it lye on as long as it will; I know when it hath done its cure, and eaten the venome of ſin out of my heart, God will take it off again. In a word, a contented Chriſtian, being ſweetly captivated under the authority of the Word, deſires to be wholly at Gods diſpoſe, and is willing to live in that ſphere and climate where God has ſet him; and if at any time there hath been an inſtrument of doing noble and brave ſervice in the publick, he knows he is but a *rational tool*, a ſervant to authority, and is content to return to his former private condition of life. *Cincinnatus*, after he had done worthily, and purchaſed to himſelf great fame in his Dictatorſhip, did notwithſtanding afterwards voluntarily return to till and manure

Pet. Mart. his four acres of Ground. Thus ſhould it be with Chriſtians, profeſſing *Godlineſs with contentment*; having ſerved *Mars*, not daring to offend *Jupiter*; leſt otherwiſe they diſcover only to the world a *brutiſh valour*, being ſo untam'd and headſtrong, that when they have conquered others, yet they are not able to rule their own ſpirits.

5. Charact. 5. He that is contented with his condition, to rid himſelf out of trouble, will not run himſelf into ſin. I deny not but a Chriſtian may lawfully ſeek to change his condition; ſo far as Gods providence doth go before, he may follow; but when men will not follow providence, but run before it, as he ſaid, *This evil is of the Lord, why ſhould I wait any longer*?* if God doth not open the door by his providence, they will break it open, and winde themſelves out of affliction by ſin, bringing their ſouls into trouble by

2 Kings 6.

bringing

bringing their eſtates out of trouble: This is far from holy Contentation, this is unbelief broken out into rebellion. A contented Chriſtian is willing to wait Gods leiſure, and will not ſtir till God open a door. As *Paul* ſaid in another caſe, *They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being* Romans, *and have caſt us into priſon, and now do they thruſt us out privily? nay verily, but let them come themſelves and fetch us out* *: So with reverence ſaith the contented Chriſtian, God hath caſt me into this condition; and though it be ſad and troubleſome, yet I will not ſtir till God by a clear Providence fetch me out. Thus thoſe brave ſpirited Chriſtians, *Heb.* 11. 35. *They accepted not deliverance* *, that is, upon baſe diſhonourable terms. They would rather ſtay in priſon, than purchaſe their liberty by carnal complyance. *Eſtius* obſerves on the place, they might not only have

* Acts 16. 37.

* Heb. 11.

had their enlargement, but been raiſed to honour, and put into offices of truſt; yet the honour of Religion was dearer to them, than either liberty or honour. A contented Chriſtian will not remove, till as the *Iſraelites* he ſee a *pillar of cloud and fire* going before him: *It is good that a man ſhould both hope, and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord**. 'Tis good to ſtay Gods leiſure, and not to extricate our ſelves out of trouble, till we ſee the ſtar of Gods providence pointing out a way to us.

* Lam. 3. 26.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Uſe 5.

Containing a Chriſtian Directory, or Rules about Contentment.

Uſe 5. I Proceed now to an Uſe of Direction, to ſhew Chriſtians how they may attain to this *Divine Art* of Contentation. Certainly it is feaſible, others of Gods Saints have reached to it. St. *Paul* here had it; and what do we think of thoſe we read of in the little book of Martyrs, *Heb.* 11. who had tryals of *cruel mockings and ſcorchings*, who wandred about in *Deſarts* and *Caves*, *uſe* 5. *Direction.*

Caves, yet were contented; ſo that it is poſſible to be had. And here I ſhall lay down ſome Rules for holy Contentment.

SECT. I.

1. Rule. *Advance Faith.*

ALl our diſquiets do iſſue immediately from unbelief. 'Tis this that raiſeth the ſtorm of diſcontent in the heart. Oh ſet Faith a work; 'tis the property of Faith to ſilence our doubtings, to ſcatter our Fears, to ſtill the heart when the paſſions are up. Faith works the heart to a ſweet ſerene compoſure; 'tis not having *food* and *rayment*, but having *Faith*, which will make us content. Faith chides down paſſion; When Reaſon begins to ſink, let Faith ſwim.

Queſt. *Queſt.* How doth Faith work Contentment? *Anſw.*

Anſw. 1. Faith ſhews the ſoul, that whatever its tryals are, yet it is from the hand of a Father; 'tis indeed a bitter cup, but *Shall I not drink the Cup which my Father hath given me to drink?* 'tis love to my ſoul; God *corrects* with the ſame love he *crowns* me; God is now training me up for heaven, he carves me, to make me a *poliſhed ſhaft.* Theſe ſufferings bring forth patience, humility, even the *peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs**. And if God can bring ſuch ſweet fruit out of a ſowre ſtock, let him graft me where he pleaſe. Thus faith brings the heart to holy contentment. *Anſw.*

* Heb. 12. 11.

2. Faith ſucks the honey of Contentment out of the hive of the Promiſe. Chriſt is the *Vine*, the Promiſes are the cluſters of Grapes that grow upon this Vine; and Faith preſſeth the ſweet wine of Contentment out of theſe ſpiritual cluſters of the Promiſes. I will ſhew you but

but one cluſter, *The Lord will give grace and glory* *: here is enough for faith to live upon. The promiſe is the flower out of which Faith diſtils the ſpirits, and quinteſſence of divine Contentment. In a word, Faith carries up the ſoul, and makes it aſpire after more noble and generous delights than earth affords, and to live *in* the world *above* the world *: would you lead contented lives? live up to the height of your Faith.

* Pſal. 84. 11.

* *Diſcite in hoc mundo ſupra mundum eſſe.* Ambr.

SECT. II.

2. Rule. *Labour for Aſſurance.*

OH let us get the intereſt clear'd between God and our own ſouls. *Intereſt* is a word much in uſe; a pleaſing word; Intereſt in great friends, intereſt-money; Oh if there be an *intereſt* worth looking after, 'tis an intereſt

tereſt between God and the ſoul; Labour to ſay, *My God.* To be without money and without friends, and without God too *, is ſad; but he whoſe faith doth flouriſh into aſſurance, that can ſay, *I know in whom I have believed* *, (as Saint *Paul*,) that man hath enough to give his heart contentment. When a mans debts are paid, and he can go abroad without fear of arreſting, what contentment is this! Oh, let your title be cleared; if God be ours, whatever we want in the creature, is infinitely made up in him. Do I want bread? I have Chriſt the bread of life. Am I under defilement? his blood is like the trees of the ſanctuary; not only for meat, but medicine *. If any thing in the world be worth labouring for; it is to get ſound evidences that God is ours. If this be once cleared, what can come amiſs? No matter what ſtorms I meet with, ſo that I know where

* Eph. 2. 12.

* 2 Tim. 1. 12.

* Ezek. 47. 12.

to

to put in for harbour. He that hath God to be his God, is ſo well contented with his condition, that he doth not much care whether he hath any thing elſe. To reſt in a condition where a Chriſtian cannot ſay God is his God, is matter of *fear*: and if he can ſay ſo truly, and yet is not contented, is matter of *ſhame*. David *encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God*; it was ſad with him, 1 Sam. 30. *Zicklag* burnt, his wives taken captive, he loſt all, and like to have loſt his ſouldiers hearts too (for they *ſpake of ſtoning him*;) yet he had the ground of Contentment within him, *viz. an intereſt in God*, and this was a pillar of ſupportment to his ſpirit. He that knows *God is his*, and all that is in God is *for his good*; if this doth not ſatisfie, I know nothing will.

SECT.

SECT. III.

3. Rule. *Get an humble ſpirit.*

THe humble man is the contented man; if his eſtate be low, his heart is lower than his eſtate; therefore is contented. If his eſteem in the world be low, he that is little in his own eyes, will not be much troubled to be little in the eyes of others. He hath a meaner opinion of himſelf, than others can have of him. The humble man ſtudies his own unworthineſs; he looks upon himſelf as *leſs than the leaſt* of Gods mercies*, and then a *little* will content him. He cryes out with *Paul*, that he is *the chief of ſinners* *; therefore doth not murmur, but admire: He doth not ſay his comforts are ſmall, but his ſins are great. He thinks it a mercy he is out of hell, therefore is contented.

* Gen. 32. 10.

* 1 Tim. 1. 15.

tented. He doth not go to carve out a more happy condition to himſelf; he knows the worſt piece God cuts him, is better than he deſerves. A proud man is never contented, he is one that hath an high opinion of himſelf; therefore under ſmall bleſſings is diſdainful, under ſmall croſſes impatient. The humble ſpirit is the contented ſpirit; if his croſs be light, he reckons it in the Inventory of his mercies; if it be heavy, yet takes it upon his knees, knowing that when his eſtate is worſer, it is to make him better. Where you lay humility for the foundation, Contentment will be the ſuperſtructure.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

4. Rule. *Keep a clear conſcience.* 1 Tim. 3. 9.

COntentment is the *Manna* that is laid up in the *Ark* of good conſcience: Oh take heed of indulging any ſin. 'Tis as natural for guilt to breed diſquiet, as for putrid matter to breed vermine. Sin lies as *Jonah* in the Ship, it raiſeth a tempeſt. If duſt or motes be gotten into the eye, they make the eye water, and cauſe a ſoreneſs in it: if the eye be clear, then it is free from that ſoreneſs: If ſin be gotten into the conſcience, which is as the eye of the ſoul, then grief and diſquiet breeds there: but keep the eye of conſcience clear, and all is well. What *Solomon* ſaith of a good ſtomach, I may ſay of *a good conſcience*, * *To the hungry ſoul every bitter thing is ſweet*; ſo to *a* * Pro. 27. 7

good conſcience every bitter thing is ſweet; it can pick Contentment out of the *Croſs*. Good conſcience turns the waters of *Marah* into Wine. Would you have a quiet Heart? get a ſmiling conſcience. I wonder not to hear *Paul* ſay, he was in every ſtate content; when he could make that triumph; *I have liv-*
*Act. 13. 4. *ed in all good conſcience unto this day* *. When once a mans reckonings are clear; it muſt needs let in abundance of contentment into the Heart. Good conſcience can ſuck contentment out of the bittereſt drug; under ſlanders, *This is our rejoycing, the*
* 2 Cor. 1. 12. *teſtimony of our conſcience* *; in caſe of impriſonment, *Paul* had his priſon-ſongs, and could play the ſweet leſſon of Contentment, when his feet
* Acts 16. 25. were in the ſtocks *; one calls it *bonæ*
Auguſtine. *conſcientiæ Paradiſus*, the Paradiſe of a good conſcience; and if it be ſo, then in priſon we may be in Paradiſe. When the times are troubleſome,

good

good conſcience makes a calm; If conſcience be clear, what though the days be cloudy? Is it not a contentment, to have a friend always by to ſpeak a good word for us? ſuch a friend is conſcience. Good conſcience as *Davids Harp*, drives away the evil ſpirit of diſcontent. When thoughts begin to ariſe, and the Heart is diſquieted, Conſcience ſaith to a man as the *King* did to *Nehemiah*, *why is thy countenance ſad* *? So ſaith conſcience, haſt not thou the *ſeed of God in thee*? art not thou an *heir of the promiſe*? Haſt not thou a treaſure that thou canſt never be plundered of? Why is thy countenance ſad? Oh keep conſcience clear; and you ſhall never want contentment. For a man to keep the *pipes* of his body, the veins and arteries free from colds and obſtructions, is the beſt way to maintain health: So, to keep conſcience clear, and to preſerve it from the ob-

*Neh. 2. 2.

ſtructions of guilt, is the beſt way to maintain contentment. Firſt, conſcience is pure, and then peaceable.

SECT. V.

5. Rule. *Learn to deny your ſelves.*

LOok well to your affections, bridle them in. Do two things.

1. Mortifie your deſires.
2. Moderate your delights.

1. *Mortifie your deſires.* We muſt not be of the Dragons temper, who (they ſay) is ſo thirſty, that no water will quench his thirſt: *Mortifie therefore your inordinate affection**; in the Greek it is ὀπωυμίαν κακὴν, your *evil affection*; to ſhew that our deſires when they are inordinate, are *evil.* Crucifie your deſires,

*Col. 3. 5.

ſires, νεκρώσατε, be as dead men; a dead man hath no appetite.

Queſt. How ſhould a Chriſtian martyr his deſires? *Queſt.*

Anſw. 1. Get a right judgment of the things here below: They are mean, beggarly things; *Wilt thou ſet thine eyes upon that which is not**? Thy appetite muſt be guided by reaſon; the affections are the feet of the ſoul, therefore they muſt *follow* the judgment, not *lead it*. *Anſw.* *Pro. 23. 5

2. Often ſeriouſly meditate of mortality; Death will ſoon crop thoſe flowers which we delight in, and pull down the fabrick of thoſe bodies which we ſo garniſh and beautifie. Think when you are locking up your Money in your Cheſt, who ſhall ſhortly lock you up in your Coffin.

2. *Moderate your delights.* Set not your Hearts too much upon any creature*. What we over-love, we ſhall over-grieve; *Rachel* *Pſ. 62. 20.

ſet her Heart too much upon her children, and when ſhe had loſt them, ſhe loſt her ſelf too: ſuch a vein of grief was opened, as could not be ſtenched, *ſhe refuſed to be comforted.* Here was diſcontent. When we let any creature lie too near our Heart, when God pulls away that comfort, a piece of our Heart is rent away with it. Too much fondneſs ends in frowardneſs. Thoſe that would be content in the want of mercy, muſt be moderate in the enjoyment. *Jonathan* dipt the rod in Honey, he did not truſt in it. Let us take heed of ingulphing our ſelves in pleaſure; better have a ſpare diet, than by having too much, to ſurfeit.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

6. Rule. *Get much of Heaven into your Heart.*

SPiritual things ſatisfie; the more of Heaven is in us, the leſs Earth will content. He that hath once taſted the love of God, his thirſt is much quenched towards ſublunary things; the joys of Gods Spirit are Heart-filling and Heart chearing joys; he that hath theſe, hath Heaven begun in him, *Rom.* 14. 17. and ſhall we not be content to be in Heaven? Oh get a ſublime Heart, *Seek the things that are above** ; flie aloft in your affections, thirſt after the graces and comforts of the Spirit: the Eagle that flies above in the air, fears not the ſtinging of the Serpent; the Serpent creeps on his belly, and ſtings only ſuch creatures as go upon the earth.

* Col. 3. 1.

Diſcontent is a ſerpent that ſtings only an earthly Heart, an heavenly ſoul that with the Eagle flies aloft, finds abundantly enough in God to give contentment, and is not ſtung with the cares and diſquiets of the world.

SECT. VII.

7. Rule. *Look not ſo much on the dark ſide of your condition, as on the light.*

GOd doth chequer his providences, white and black, as the pillar of cloud had its light ſide and dark; look on the light ſide of thy eſtate; who looks on the backſide of a landskip? Suppoſe thou art caſt in a Law-ſuit, there is the *dark-ſide*; yet thou haſt ſome land left, there is the *light ſide*. Thou haſt ſickneſs in thy body, there is the *dark-ſide*; but grace in thy ſoul,

ſoul, there is the *light ſide*. Thou haſt a child taken away, there is the *dark ſide*; thy husband lives, there is the *light ſide*. Gods Providences in this life are various, repreſented by thoſe ſpeckled Horſes among the Myrtle-trees, which were * the *red* and *white*; mercies and afflictions are inter-woven; God doth ſpeckle his work. Oh, ſaith one, I want ſuch a comfort; but weigh all thy mercies in the ballance, and that will make thee content. If a man did want a finger, would he be ſo diſcontented for the loſs of that, as not to be thankful for all the other parts and joints of the body? Look on the *light ſide* of your condition, and then all your diſcontents will eaſily disband; do not pore upon your loſſes, but ponder upon your mercies. What! wouldſt thou have no croſs at all? Why ſhould one man think to have all good things, when himſelf is good but in part? wouldſt thou

*Zach. 1. 8

thou have no evil about thee, who haſt ſo much evil in thee? thou art not fully ſanctified in this life, how then thinkeſt thou to be fully ſatisfied? never look for perfection of contentment till there be perfection of Grace.

SECT. VIII.

8. Rule. *Conſider in what a poſture we ſtand here in the World.*

1. WE are in a *military* condition, we are ſouldiers*; now a ſoldier is content with any thing: what though he hath not his ſtately Houſe: his rich furniture, his ſoft bed, his full table, yet he doth not complain; he can lie in ſtraw as well as down; he minds not his lodging; but his thoughts run upon dividing the ſpoil, and the Garland of Honour that ſhall be ſet upon

* 2 Tim. 2. 3.

upon his Head; and for hope of this, is content to run any hazard, endure any hardſhip. Were it not abſurd to hear him complain that he wants ſuch proviſion, and is fain to lie out in the fields? a Chriſtian is a *military perſon*, he fights the Lords battels, he is Chriſts Enſign-bearer. Now what though he endures hard fare, and the Bullets flie about? he fights for a Crown, and therefore muſt be content.

2. We are in a *peregrine condition*; Pilgrims and Travellers: A man that is in a ſtrange Countrey is contented with any diet or uſage, he is glad of any thing, though he hath not that reſpect or attendance as he looks for at home; nor is capable of the priviledges and immunities of that place, he is content; he knows when he comes into his own Countrey he hath lands to inherit, and there he ſhall have honour and reſpect: So it is with a child of God, he is in a pilgrim-

pilgrim-condition, *I am a ſtranger with thee, and a ſojourner, as all my Fathers were**. Therefore let a Chriſtian be content: he is in the world, but not of the world; he is born of God, and is a Citizen of the new *Jeruſalem**, therefore, though *he hunger and thirſt, and have no certain dwelling place**, yet he muſt be content; it will be better when he comes into his own Country.

*Pſ. 39. 12.

*Heb. 12. 10.

*1 Cor. 4. 11.

3. We are in a *mendicant condition*; we are beggars, we beg at Heaven gate, *Give us this day our dayly bread*; we live upon Gods alms, therefore muſt be content with any thing; a beggar muſt not pick and chuſe, he is contented with the refuſe. Oh, why doſt thou murmur that art a beggar, and art fed out of the alms basket of Gods Providence?

SECT.

SECT. IX.

9. Rule. *Let not your hopes depend* extrinsicè *upon these outward things.*

LEan not upon sandy pillars; we oft build our comforts upon such a friend, or estate, and when that prop is removed, all our joy is gone, and our Hearts begin either to *fail* or *fret*. A lame man leans on his crutches, and if they *break* he is undone; let not thy contentment go upon crutches which may soon fail; the ground of contentment must be within thy self. The word αὐτάρκεια, which is used for contentment, signifies self-sufficiency; a Christian hath that from within that is able to support him, that strength of faith and *good hope through grace*, as bears up his Heart in the deficiency of outward

ward comforts. The Philoſophers of old, when their eſtates were gone, yet could take contentment in the goods of the mind, their learning and virtue; and ſhall not a believer much more in the grace of the Spirit, that rich enamel and embroidery of the ſoul? Say with thy ſelf, If friends leave me, if riches take wings, yet I have that within comforts me, *viz.* a heavenly treaſure, *Omnia mea mecum porto*; when the bloſſoms of my eſtate are blown off, ſtill there is the ſap of contentment in the root, my Heart; I have ſtill an intereſt in God, and that intereſt cannot be broken off. Oh never place your felicity in theſe dull and beggarly things here below.

SECT.

SECT. X.

10. Rule. *Let us often compare our condition.*

QUeſt. *How ſhall I compare?*
Anſw. Make this five-fold compariſon.

1. Let us compare our condition and our deſert together; if we have not what we deſire, we have more than we deſerve. For our *mercies*, we have deſerved *leſs*, for our afflictions, we have deſerved *more*. 1 *Compariſon.*

Firſt, in regard of our *mercies*, we have deſerved leſs. What can we deſerve: *Can man be profitable to the Almighty?* we live upon free grace. *Alexander* gave a great gift to one of his ſubjects; the man being much taken with it, This (ſaith he) is more than I am worthy of; I do not give thee this, ſaith the King, becauſe thou art

art worthy of it, but I give a gift like *Alexander*. Whatever we have is not *merit*, but *bounty*; the leaſt bit of bread is more than God owes us; we can bring faggots to our own burning, but not one flower to the Garland of our ſalvation; he that hath the leaſt mercy will die in Gods debt.

Secondly, in regard of our *afflictions*, we have deſerved more. *Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve* *. Is our condition ſad? we have deſerved it ſhould be worſe: hath God taken away our eſtate from us? he might have taken away Chriſt from us: hath he thrown us into Priſon? he might have thrown us into Hell; he might as well damn us, as whip us; this ſhould make us contented.

* Exra 9. 13.

2. *Compariſon.*

2. Let us compare our condition with others; and this will make us content; we look at them who are above us; let us look at them who are below us *; we ſee one in his ſilks

* *Dum tibi aliena pericula memoras mitius portes tua.* Iſid. Soliloq. 1.

silks, another in his sack-cloth; one hath the waters of a full cup wrung out to him, another is mingling his drink with tears; how many pale faces do we behold, whom not sickness, but want, hath brought into a consumption! think of this, and be content. 'Tis worse with them, who perhaps deserve better than we, and are higher in Gods favour. Am I in prison; was not *Daniel* in a worse place, *viz.* The Lyons Den? Do I live in a mean cottage? Look on them who are banished from their Houses. We read of the primitive Saints, *that they wandred up and down in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, of whom the world was not worthy**. Hast thou a gentle fit of an Ague? look on them who are tormented with the Stone and Gout, *&c.* others of Gods children have had greater afflictions, and have born them better than we. *Daniel* fed upon pulse, and drank water, yet was fairer than they who

* Heb. 11. 37.

art worthy of it, but I give a gift like *Alexander*. Whatever we have is not *merit*, but *bounty*; the leaſt bit of bread is more than God owes us; we can bring faggots to our own burning, but not one flower to the Garland of our ſalvation; he that hath the leaſt mercy will die in Gods debt.

Secondly, in regard of our *afflictions*, we have deſerved more. *Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve* *. Is our condition ſad? we have deſerved it ſhould be worſe: hath God taken away our eſtate from us? he might have taken away Chriſt from us: hath he thrown us into Priſon? he might have thrown us into Hell; he might as well damn us, as whip us; this ſhould make us contented.

* Exra 9. 13.

2. *Compariſon.*

2. Let us compare our condition with others; and this will make us content; we look at them who are above us; let us look at them who are below us *; we ſee one in his ſilks

* *Dum tibi aliena pericula memoras mitius portes tua.* Iſid. Soliloq. 1.

ſilks, another in his ſack-cloth; one hath the waters of a full cup wrung out to him, another is mingling his drink with tears; how many pale faces do we behold, whom not ſickneſs, but want, hath brought into a conſumption! think of this, and be content. 'Tis worſe with them, who perhaps deſerve better than we, and are higher in Gods favour. Am I in priſon; was not *Daniel* in a worſe place, *viz.* The Lyons Den? Do I live in a mean cottage? Look on them who are baniſhed from their Houſes. We read of the primitive Saints, *that they wandred up and down in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, of whom the world was not worthy**. Haſt thou a gentle fit of an Ague? look on them who are tormented with the Stone and Gout, *&c.* others of Gods children have had greater afflictions, and have born them better than we. *Daniel* fed upon pulſe, and drank water, yet was fairer than they who

* Heb. 11. 37.

are of the Kings portion*; ſome Chriſtians who have been in a lower condition, that have fed upon pulſe and water, have looked better; *viz.* been more patient and contented than we who enjoy abundance. Do others rejoice in affliction, and do we repine? Can they take up their Croſs and walk cheerfully under it, and do we under a lighter Croſs murmur?

* Dan. 1. 16.

3. Let us compare our condition with Chriſts upon Earth; what a poor, mean condition was he pleaſed to be in for us? he was contented with any thing. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; that though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor**. He could have brought down an houſe from Heaven with him, or challenged the high places of the earth; but he was contented to be in the *wine-preſs*, that we might be in the *wine-cellar*; and to live poor, that we might die rich; the manger was

* 2 Cor. 8. 9.

was his cradle, the cobwebs his canopy; he, who is now preparing mansions for us in Heaven, had none for himself on earth, *he had no where to lay his head.* Christ came in *Formâ pauperis*; who *being in the form of God, took upon him the form of a servant* *. We read not of any sums of money he had; when he wanted money, he was fain to work a miracle for it *. Jesus Christ was in a low condition; he was never high, but when he was lifted up upon the Cross, and that was his humility; he was content to live poor, and dye cursed. Oh compare your condition with Christs.

* Phil. 2. 7.

* Mat. 17. 27.

4. Let us compare our condition with what it was once, and this will make us content. 4. *Comparison.*

First, Let us compare our *spiritual estate* with what it was once. What were we when we lay in our blood? we were heirs apparent to hell, having no right to pluck one leaf from the

Ephes. 2. 22. tree of the promise; it was a *Christless* and *hopeless* condition, *Ephes.* 2. 12. but now God hath cut off the entail of hell and damnation; he hath taken you out of the wild Olive of nature, and engraffed you into Christ; making you living branches of that living Vine; he hath not only caused the light to shine *upon* you, but *into* * 2 Cor. 4. 6. you *, and hath interested you in all the priviledges of son-ship, is not here that may make the soul content?

Secondly, Let us compare our *temporal estate* with what it was once: alas, we had nothing when we stepped out of the womb; *For we brought nothing with us into the world* *; if we * 1 Tim. 6. 7. have not that which we desire, we have more than we did bring with us; we brought nothing with us (*but sin*) other creatures bring something with them into the world; the Lamb brings wool, the silk-worm silk, *&c.* but we brought nothing with us. What if our condition at present be

be low? it is better than it was once; therefore having food and rayment, let us be content; whatever we have, Gods providence fetcht it in to us; and if we loſe all, yet we have as much as we brought with us. This was that that made *Job* content, *Naked came I out of my Mothers womb**, as if he had ſaid, though God hath taken away all from me, yet why ſhould I murmur? I am as rich now as I was when I came into the world, I have as much left as I brought with me: naked came I hither: therefore bleſſed be the name of the Lord. *Job 1.21.

5. Let us compare our condition, with what it ſhall be ſhortly. There is a time ſhortly coming, when if we had all the riches of *India*, they would do us no good; we muſt dye, and can carry nothing with us, ſo ſaith the Apoſtle, *It is certain we can carry nothing out of the world**; therefore it follows, *having food and rayment let* 5. *Compariſon.* * 1 Tim. 6. 7.

us be therewith content, Ver. 8. Open the rich mans grave, and see what is there; you may find the *Misers* bones, but not his riches: were we to live for ever here, or could we carry our riches into another world, then indeed we might be discontented, when we look upon our empty bags: but it is not so: God may presently seal a warrant for death to apprehend us; and when we dye we cannot carry our estate with us. Honour and riches descend not into the grave, why then are we troubled at our outward condition? why do we disguise our selves with discontent? Oh lay up a stock of grace, be rich in faith and good works, these *riches will follow us* *; no other coyn but Grace will pass current in Heaven, silver and gold will not go there; labour to *be rich towards God*; and as for other things, be not solicitous, *we shall carry nothing with us* *.

Vetera franguntur sepulchra, ossa divitum agnoscas non opes. Bede.

* Rev. 14. 13.

* Luke 12 21.

SECT.

SECT. XI.

11. Rule. *Do not to bring your condition to your mind, but bring your mind to your condition..*

THe way for a Christian to be contented, is not by raising his estate higher, but by bringing his spirit lower: not by making his Barns wider, but his Heart narrower *; one man a whole Lordship or Mannor will not content; another is satisfied with a few acres of land; what is the difference? the one studies to satisfie curiosity, the other necessity; the one thinks what he may *have*, the other thinks what he may *spare*.

* *Non què parum habet sed qui plus cupit, pauper est.* Laert. Diogenes.

* *Si vis esse Dives (inquit Pithocles) non est pecuniæ adjiciendum, sed cupiditatibus detrahendum.*

* Πλούσιος γὰρ οὐκ ὁ πολλῶν χρημάτων δεόμενος, ἀλλὰ ὁ μηδενὸς χρείαν ἔχων. Chrysost.

SECT. XII.

12. Rule. *Study the vanity of the Creature.*

IT matters not whether we have more or leſs of theſe things, they have vanity written upon the frontiſpiece of them; the world is like a *ſhadow that declineth*: it is delightful, but deceitful; it promiſeth more than we find, and it fails us when we have moſt need of it*. All the world rings changes, and is conſtant only in its diſappointments: what then if we have leſs of that which is at beſt but voluble and fluid? The world is as full of *mutation* as *motion*; and what if God cuts us ſhort in ſublunaries? The more a man hath to do with the world, the more he hath to do with vanity. The world may be compared to Ice, which is ſmooth, but

* *O quantum eſt in rebus inane.*

but ſlippery; or to the Ægyptian Temples, without very beautiful, and ſumptuous, but within nothing to be ſeen but the image of an Ape; every creature ſaith concerning ſatisfaction, *It is not in me.* The world is not a filling, but a flying comfort. 'Tis like a game at Tennis: Providence bandies her Golden balls, firſt to one, and then to another. Why are we diſcontented at the loſs of theſe things, but becauſe we expect that from them which is not, and repoſe that in them which we ought not; *Jonah was exceeding glad of the Gourd**, what a vanity was it? is it much to ſee a withering Gourd ſmitten? or to ſee the Moon dreſſing it ſelf in a new ſhape and figure?

* Jon. 4.6. *Quid eſt omnis hujus mundi voluptas? annon virens hedera quæ texili ſylva per parietem inſerpit, lætamque ſupra caput umbram explicat? paravit Deus vermem & percuſſit hederam & exaruit; ita prorſus hederæ noſtræ ſubito marceſcunt, ſimulque cum illis omne illud umbratile gaudium.* Drexel. de Æter. p. 163.

SECT.

SECT. XIII.

13. Rule. *Get fancy regulated.*

IT is the fancy which raiſeth the price of things above their real worth; what is the reaſon one Tulip is worth five pounds, another perhaps not worth one ſhilling; fancy raiſeth the price; the difference is rather imaginary than real: ſo why it ſhould be better to have thouſands than hundreds, is, becauſe men fancy it ſo; if we could fancy a lower condition better *, as having leſs care in it, and leſs account, it would be far more eligible; the water that ſprings out of the Rock, drinks as ſweet, as if it came out of a Golden Chalice *; things are as we fancy them.

* *Status hominis efficax virtutis gymnaſium* Archeſilaus

* *Duleis proſiliens aqua ſive è petra fluens, ſive in poculo, ſive ex mandibulo aſini. ad reſtinguendum ſitum ſufficit: Panis ſubcinericius, mel agreſte poſſunt te ſortem reddere æque ac cibus ſplendidiſſimus.* Hyperius.

them. Ever ſince the fall, the fancy is diſtempered; *God ſaw that the imagination of the thoughts of his heart were evil* *. Fancy looks through wrong ſpectacles; pray that God will ſanctifie your fancy; a lower condition would content, if the mind and fancy were ſet right. *Diogenes* preferred his Cynical life before *Alexanders* royalty; he fanſied his little cloyſter beſt. *Fabricius* a poor man, yet deſpiſed the gold of King *Pyrrhus*.

* Gen. 6. 5.

——*Contentus honeſto*
Fabricius parvo, ſpernebat munera Regum.
Sudabatque gravi Conſul Serranus aratro. Claud. l. 1.

Could we cure a diſtempered fancy, we might ſoon conquer a diſcontented heart.

SECT.

SECT. XIV.

14. Rule. *Consider how little will suffice nature.*

THe body is but of small continent, and is easily recruited. Christ hath taught us to pray *for our daily bread*; *Parva seges satis est*, Nature is content with a little: μὴ διψᾶν, μὴ ῥιγᾶν, not to thirst, nor to starve is enough, saith *Gregory Nazianzen*; meat and drink is a Christians riches, saith St. *Hierom*; and the Apostle saith, *Having food and rayment, let us be content.*

* *cibus & potus sunt divitiæ Christianorum.*

——O prodiga rerum
Luxuries, nunquam parvo contenta paratu!
Et quæsitorum pelago, terraq; ciborum
Ambitiosa Fames, & lautæ gloria mensæ!
Discite quam parvo liceat producere vitam, Et

Et quantum natura petit———

Lucan. l. 4. *Pharſal.*

The ſtomach is ſooner fill'd than the eye: How quickly would a man be content, if he would ſtudy rather to ſatisfie his *hunger* than his *humour!*

SECT. XV.

15. Rule. *Believe the preſent Condition is beſt for us.*

FLeſh and blood is not a competent Judge. Surfeited ſtomachs are for banquetting ſtuff; but a man that regards his health, is rather for ſolid food. Vain men fancy ſuch a condition beſt, and would flouriſh in their bravery, whereas a wiſe Chriſtian hath his will melted into Gods will, and thinks it beſt to be at his finding: God is wiſe; he knows whether we need Food or Phyſick; and if we could acquieſce in

in providence the quarrel would ſoon be at an end. Oh what a ſtrange creature would man be, if he were what he could wiſh himſelf! Be content to be at Gods allowance, God knows which is the fitteſt paſture to put his ſheep in: Sometimes a more barren ground doth well, whereas rank paſture may rot. Do I meet with ſuch a croſs? God ſhews me what the world is: he hath no better way to wean me, than by putting me to a ſtep-mother. Doth God ſtint me in my allowance? he is now dieting me. Do I meet with loſs? it is, that God may keep *me* from being loſt. Every croſs wind ſhall at laſt blow me to the right port. Did we believe that condition beſt which God doth parcel out to us, we ſhould cheerfully ſubmit and ſay, *The lines are fallen in pleaſant places.*

SECT.

SECT. XVI.

16. Rule. *Do not too much indulge the flesh.*

WE have taken an oath in Baptism to *forsake the flesh*. The flesh is a worse enemy than the Devil; it is a *bosom traytor*: an enemy within is worst. If there were no Devil to tempt, the flesh would be another *Eve*, to tempt to the *forbidden fruit*. Oh take heed of giving way to it; whence is all our discontent, but from the fleshly part? The flesh puts us upon the immoderate pursuit of the World; it consults for ease and plenty; and if it be not satisfied, then discontents begin to arise. Oh, let it not have the reins; martyr the flesh; in spiritual things the flesh is a *sluggard*; in secular things an *Horsleech*, crying, Give, give. The flesh is an enemy

enemy to ſuffering*, it will ſooner make man a *Courtier* than a *Martyr*. Oh keep it under, put its neck under Chriſts yoke, ſtretch and nail it to his Croſs; never let a Chriſtian look for *contentment* in his ſpirit, till there be *confinement* in his fleſh.

* *Non durum eſt quod patimur, ſed molles ſumus.* Sen.

SECT. XVII.

17. Rule. *Meditate much on the glory which ſhall be revealed.*

THere are great things laid up in Heaven: Though it be ſad for the preſent, yet let us be content in that it will ſhortly be better; it is but a while, and we ſhall be with Chriſt bathing our ſouls in the fountain of his love; we ſhall never complain of wants or injuries any more; our croſs may be heavy, but one ſight of Chriſt will make us forget all our former ſorrows. There are two things ſhould give contentment:

1. That God will make us able to bear

bear our troubles*. God (ſaith *Chryſoſtom*) doth like a Lunatiſt, who will not let the ſtrings of his Lute be too ſlack, leſt it ſpoil the muſick; nor will he ſuffer them to be too hard ſtretched or ſcrued up, leſt they break: So doth God deal with us: he will not let us have too much proſperity, leſt this ſpoyl the muſick of prayer and repentance; nor yet too much adverſity, leſt the ſpirit *fail before me*, and the ſouls *which he hath made**. * 1 Cor. 10. 13. *Chryſ.* * Iſ. 57. 16.

2. When we have ſuffered a *while**, we ſhall be perfected in glory; the Croſs ſhall be our ladder by which we ſhall climb up to Heaven. Be then content, and the ſcene will alter. God will ere long turn our water into wine; the hope of this is enough to drive away all diſtempers from *the Heart*. Bleſſed be God, it will be better: *We have no continuing City here**, therefore our afflictions cannot continue. A wiſe man looks ſtill to * 1 Pet. 5. 1. * Heb. 13.

the end: The end of the juſt man is peace *. Methinks the ſmoothneſs o the end ſhould make amends for the ruggedneſs of the way. O eternity, eternity! think often of the *Kingdom prepared*. *David* was advanced from the field to the Throne. Firſt, he held his *Shepherds ſtaff*, and ſhortly after the *Royal Scepter*. Gods people may be put to hard ſervices here; but God hath choſen them to be *Kings* to ſit upon the throne with the Lord Jeſus. This being weighed in the ballance of Faith, would be an excellent means to bring the Heart to Contentment.

* Pſ. 37. 37.

SECT. XVIII.

18. Rule. *Be much in Prayer.*

THe laſt Rule for contentment, is *Be much in Prayer*. Beg of God, that he will work our Hearts to this bleſſed frame, *Is any man afflicted? let him pray* *: So, is any man diſcontented?

* Ja. 5. 13.

ted? let him pray, Prayer gives vent. The opening of a vein lets out the bad blood: When the heart is filled with ſorrow and diſquiet, prayer lets out the bad blood. The key of prayer oyled with tears *, unlocks the Heart of all its diſcontents. Prayer is an holy ſpell or charm to drive away trouble; Prayer is the unboſoming of the ſoul, the unloading of all our cares in Gods breaſt, and this uſhers in ſweet contentment. When there is any burden upon our ſpirits, by opening our mind to a friend, we find our Heart finely eaſed and quieted; It is not our *ſtrong reſolutions*, but our *ſtrong requeſts* to God, which muſt give the Heart eaſe in trouble; by Prayer the ſtrength of Chriſt is brought into the ſoul; and where that is, a man is able to go through any condition. *Paul* could be in every ſtate content: but that you may not think he was able to do this of himſelf; he tells you, that though

* *Expletur lachrymis, egeriturq; dolor.*

Ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ μεγαληγορία τὸ πρᾶγμα ἦν ὅρα πῶς ἐπιλαυβάνεται, ταχέως πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με Χριστῷ, οὐκ ἐμὸν τὸ κατόρθωμα, ἀλλὰ τοῦ τὴν ἰσχὺν δεδωκότος ἐστίν. Chrysost.

he could want and abound, and πάντα ποιεῖν *do all things* *, yet it was *through Christ strengthening him*, Phil. 4. 13. 'Tis the child that writes, but it is the Scrivener guides his hand. St. *Paul* arrived at the hardest duty in Religion, *viz. Contentment*; but the spirit was his *Pilot*, and Christ his *strength*, and this strength was ushered in by holy prayer. Prayer is a powerful Oratour. Prayer is an *Orator* with God, and an *exorcist* against sin. The best way is to pray down discontent. What *Luther* saith of *concupiscence*, I may say of *Discontent*; prayer is a sacred Leech, * to suck out the venome and swelling of this passion. Prayer composeth the Heart, and brings it into tune. Hath God deprived you of many comforts? bless God that he left you the spirit of Prayer.

* *Oratio est hirudo animæ.*

Us

Uſe 6. The laſt uſe is of comfort, or an encouraging word to the contented Chriſtian. If there be an Heaven upon Earth, thou haſt it. O Chriſtian, thou maiſt inſult over thy troubles, and with the *Leviathan* laugh at the ſhaking of a ſpear, *Job* 41. 29. What ſhall I ſay? thou art a crown to thy profeſſion; thou doſt hold it out to all the world, that there's virtue enough in Religion to give the ſoul contentment. Thou ſheweſt height of grace. When grace is *crowning*, it is not ſo much for us to be content; but when grace is *conflicting*, and meets with croſſes, tentations, agonies; now to be content, this is a glorious thing indeed. *Uſe 6. Conſolation.* Job 41. 29.

To a contented Chriſtian I ſhall ſay two things for a farewel.

Firſt, God is exceedingly taken with ſuch a frame of Heart. God ſaith of a contented Chriſtian, as *David* once ſaid of *Goliahs* ſword, *there is*

none like that, Give it me, 1 Sam. 21. 9. If you would please God, and be *men of his Heart*, be contented. It is said that *Rebecca* made *Isaac* savoury meat, such as her Husband loved; would you give God *such a dish as he loves*, bring him this of Contentment. The Musitian hath many lessons to play; but he hath one above all the rest: There are many lessons of holy Musick that delight God; the lesson of repentance, humility, &c. But this lesson of Contentment is the sweetest lesson that a Believer can play, God hates a froward spirit.

Secondly, the contented Christian shall be no loser. What lost *Job* by his patience? God gave him three times as much as he had before. What lost *Abraham* by his Contentment, he was content to leave his Country at Gods call, the Lord makes a covenant with him, that he would be *his God*, Gen. 17. He changeth

changeth his name; no more *Abram*, but *Abraham*, the Father of many Nations. God makes his ſeed as the Stars of Heaven; nay, Honours him with this Title, * *The Father of the faithful.* The Lord makes known his ſecrets to him, *Shall I hide from* Abraham *the thing that I will do*; God ſettles a rich inheritance upon him, that land which was a type of Heaven, and afterwards tranſlated him into the bleſſed Paradiſe. God will be ſure to reward the contented Chriſtian. As our Saviour ſaid in another caſe to *Nathanael*, *Becauſe I ſaid I ſaw thee under the fig-tree, believeſt thou? thou ſhalt ſee greater things than theſe.* So I ſay, Art thou contented (O Chriſtian) with a little? thou ſhalt ſee greater things than theſe; God will diſtill the ſweet influences of his love into thy ſoul; he will raiſe thee up friends; he will bleſs the oyl in the cruſe; and when that is

* Gen. 18. 17.

Joh. 1. 50.

done, he will crown thee with an eternal enjoyment of himſelf; he will give thee Heaven, where thou ſhalt have as much contentment as thy ſoul can poſſibly thirſt after.

FINIS.

THE INDEX.

Chap. 1. *THe Introduction to the Text.* Page 1, 2
Chap. 2. *Containing the firſt Propoſition.* 5
Chap. 3. *Containing the ſecond Propoſition.* 14
Chap. 4. *Containing the third grand Propoſition, viz. a gracious ſpirit is a contented ſpirit.* 22
The leſſon of Contentment is hard to be learned. It is of univerſal extent. ibid.
It concerns { *Rich men.* 24 / *Poor men.* 26
Chap. 5. *whether a Chriſtian may not reſent his condition with ſome ſadneſs, and yet be content?* 32
Whether a Chriſtian may not lay open his grievances to God, and yet be content? 33
What it is properly that Contentment doth exclude out of the Dioceſs. 34

Chap.

Chap. 6. *Shewing the nature of Contentment.* 36

Contentment is
- *A divine thing.* ib.
- *An intrinsecal thing.* 38
- *An habitual thing.* 39

Chap. 7. *Containing the reasons which press to holy Contentment.*

1. *Gods Precept.* 41
2. *Gods Promise.* 42
3. *Gods Decree.* 43, 44

Chap. 8. *The first Use, shewing how a Christian may live comfortably in the midst of troubles.* 49

Chap. 9. *Use 2. A reproof to the discontented Christian.* 52

Chap. 10. *Use 3. A Swasive to contentment.* 58

Several Apologies that discontent makes for it self, answered.

The first Apology answered, 59
The second Apology answered. 66
The third Apology answered. 72
The fourth Apology answered. 78
The fifth Apology answered. 85
The sixth Apology answered. 90

The

The ſeventh Apology anſwered. 93
The eighth Apology anſwered. 96
The ninth Apology anſwered. 99
The tenth Apology anſwered. 108
The eleventh Apology anſwered. 110
The Twelfth Apology anſwered. 114
Chap. 11. *Divine arguments or motives to Contentment.*
The firſt argument, The excellency of Contentment. 118, 119
The ſecond argument, a Chriſtian hath that which may make him content. 142
The third argument, Elſe we confute our own prayers. 147
The fourth argument. By Contentment God comes to have his end, and Satan miſſeth of his end. 147
The fifth argument, Thus a Chriſtian gets a victory over himſelf. 150
The ſixth argument, all croſs providences work for our good. 152
The ſeventh argument, The evil of Diſcontent. 164

which

Which appears in three things
- *The ſordidneſs.* 165
- *The ſinfulneſs.* 168
- *The ſimplicity.* 178

The eighth argument, The more a man hath, the leſs he is ſatisfied. 183
The ninth argument, the brevity of life. 184
The tenth argument, the evils that do attend a proſperous condition. 187
The eleventh argument, the examples of thoſe who have been eminent for contentation. 196
The twelfth argument, the preſent miſery and indigence of the godly, is all the Hell he ſhall have. 203
The thirteenth argument, not to have a contented mind, is a great judgment. 205

Chap. 12. *Three Cautions laid down.*
Though a Chriſtian ſhould be in every ſtate content, yet

he muſt not be content
1. *In his natural eſtate.* 207
2. *Where God is diſhonoured.* 210
3. *With a little grace.* 214

Chap.

Chap. 13. *The fourth* Use, *tryal*; *Shewing the Character of a contented spirit.*
1. *A contented spirit is a silent spirit.* 222
2. *A contented spirit is a chearful spirit* 223
3. *A contented spirit is a thankful spirit.* 224
4. *To a contented spirit nothing comes amiss.* 226
5. *A contented spirit will not rid himself out of trouble, by running himself into sin.* 230
Chap. 14. Use 5. *Directions propounding several Rules for holy Contentment.* 233
1. Rule. *Advance faith.* 236
2. Rule. *Breathe after assurance:* 239
3. Rule. *Get an humble spirit.* 239
4. Rule. *Keep a clear conscience.* 241
5. Rule. *Learn to deny your selves.* 244
6. Rule. *Labour for an heavenly heart.* 247
7. Rule. *Look not on the dark side of your condition, but the light side.* 248
8. Rule.

8. Rule. *Consider in what a posture you stand here in the world.* 250
9. Rule. *Let not your hopes depend upon extrinsecals.* 252
10. Rule. *Often compare your condition.* 255
11. Rule. *Go not to bring your condition to your mind, but bring your mind to your condition.* 263
10. Rule. *Study the vanity of the creature.* 264
13. Rule. *Get fancy regulated.* 266
14. Rule. *Consider how little will suffice nature.* 268
15. Rule. *Believe the present condition best.* 269
16. Rule. *Do not too much indulge the flesh.* 272
17. Rule. *Meditate much on the Glory to be revealed.* 272
18. Rule. *Be much in Prayer.* 274
Chap. 15. *Use 6. Comfort to the contented Christian.* 277

6 SE 55

FINIS.

e you
250
d up-
25.
ndi-
255
liti-
ind
263
the
264
266
uf-
268
ti-
269
he
2
y
2
4
-
.